

FEB., 1907

15 CENTS

AINSLEE'S

THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS



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oils

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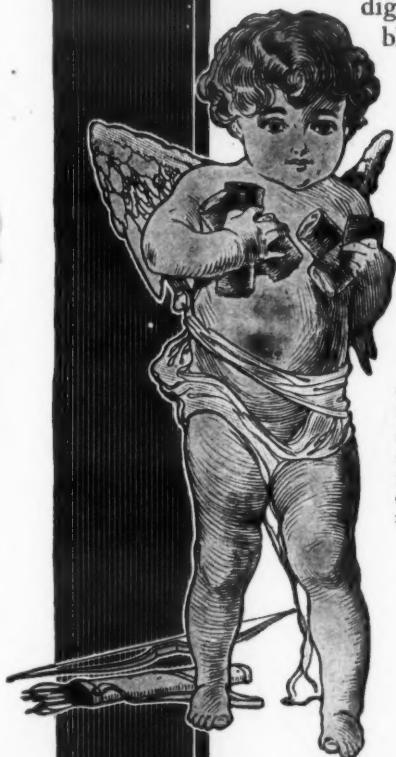
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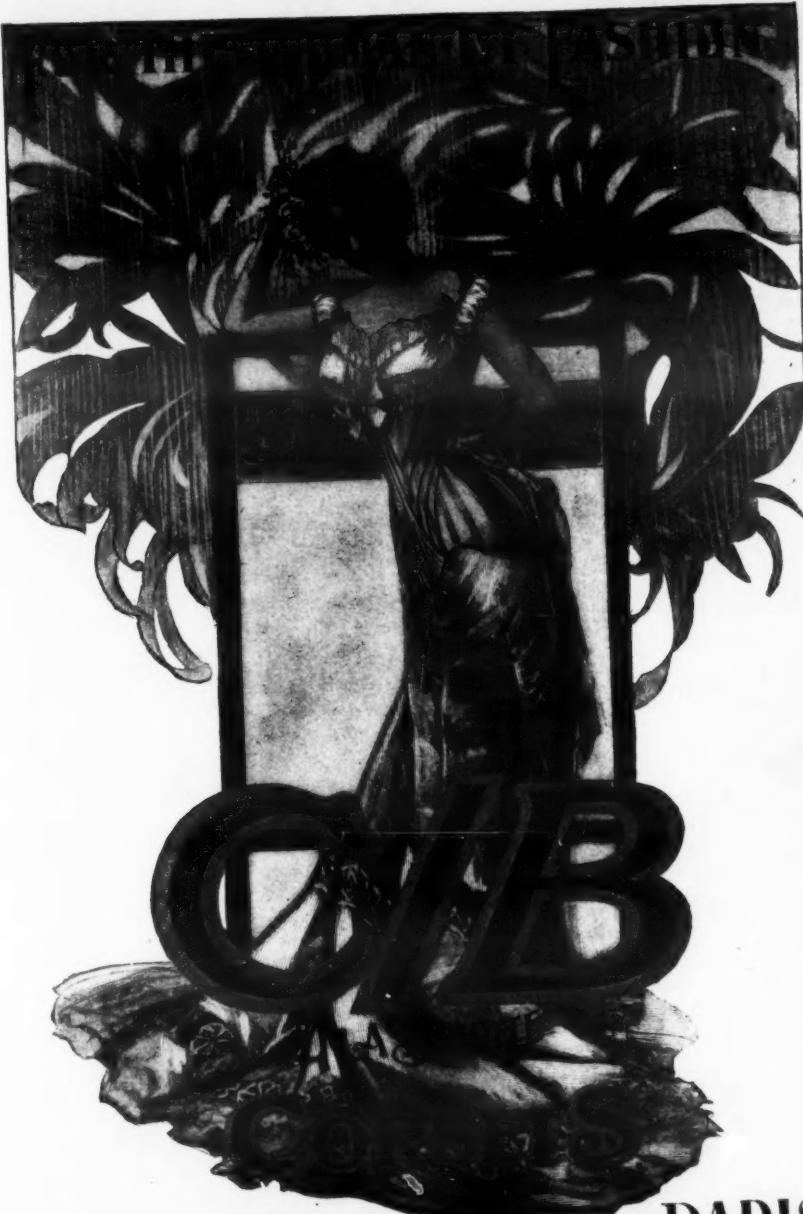
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AINSLEE'S

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VOL. XIX

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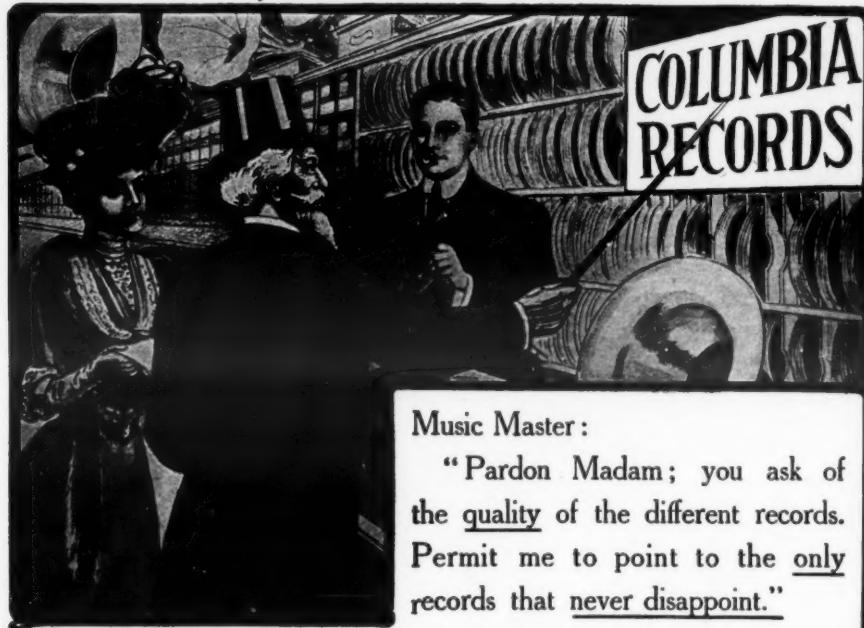
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AINSLEE'S

VOL. XIX.

FEBRUARY, 1907.

No. 1.

CANDACE *By Anna A. Rogers*



ANDACE HALE was not aware of it until afterward, but she had never really lived during all the twenty-four years of her life until that summer in Venice. She had only been getting ready to live—painstakingly damascening the elaborate helmet destined to cover her head during the coming battle of life, but entirely forgetting the cuirass that should protect her heart.

For many years she had passed through the gateway of a university which bears the legend: "Enter to grow in wisdom," but the day came when she learned that the knowledge to be found within those portals must be melted in the crucible of living, in order to be transmuted into wisdom.

For two years after she had taken her degree at the Annex, she gave herself up to one continuous orgy of lectures. The nearest approach to relaxation was her afternoon symphony concerts, which she attended alone winter after winter, always sitting in the same seat.

She had no friends among the other sex, and few among her own, because her house-mate, Cousin Prudence, lived on walnuts and fruit, and did not like strange dishes or strange people about the house, "interrupting the current of her rhythmic vibrations," she explained. That the aforesaid house, and all that therein was, happened to be Candace's did not relax a single cryptic edict in that small household.

It was a narrow red brick house, with an English basement entrance. The spotless white doorway was so very quaint, that in summer-time artists used to sketch it, seated on their little stools under the great elms across the street. Even that had been known to affect Cousin Prudence's "vibrations."

Anybody who is anybody, in the city where Candace and her forefathers had had their highly respectable but smileless being, owns either a Lely or a Copley. Candace Hale had both in her somber drawing-room.

Through a ramification of the same local convention she carried a serious-looking shopping-bag, in which she put her small purchases, her lecture and concert-tickets, and her numerous programs.

The girl bought her apparel exclusively—and looked it—from a provincial shop in the heart of the city, whose very limitations represented sacred tradition. To have bought other than the most expensive materials for her gowns would have seemed to her and her acquaintances both underbred and slightly immoral. But, after the quality was secured, to have given the matter of personal appearance any further attention whatever would have seemed to them even more so.

So she drove about alone in her severe black coupé from her lectures to her concerts; from the funny little flower-booth labeled "Arboretum" to the picture-shop which heralds itself quite grandly "Opus Pictum"; and that none of these strange things aroused in the girl any desire to laugh consummately, does not derogate from the high level of local learning, but only shows a very low ebb of local humor.

But happily—or unhappily, as you choose—Candace had a maternal aunt who lived in a larger city, which has a way of more completely assimilating its educational advantages, and finding leisure left for some of life's blessed foolishness.

Mrs. Adair only happened to go to Boston one early spring, because she dreaded an impending avalanche of her husband's relations. He flatly refused to telegraph a naked lie stopping the avalanche, so Mrs. Adair consented to drape the fiction by fleeing into temporary exile. The second day of her banishment she suddenly bethought herself of her dead sister's little girl, whom Mrs. Adair had not seen since she had had her final quarrel with the girl's mother many years before.

Mrs. Adair had, during that time, made several overtures of peace, which had been met by renewed hostilities.

Jane Hale had always said that her only sister, Frances Adair, and she were "cerebrally divergent." Frances Adair had always said that Jane made her tired.

The latter's death had occurred while Mrs. Adair was going around the world in a friend's yacht. She had always

been curious about Jane's little girl, although up to that time not uncontrollably so.

When Mrs. Adair discovered that there was no telephone in her sister's house, the same old teasing tentacles of Jane's superiority reached out through time and across space, and, regretfully it must be stated, she used language that made her feel better; and really did not do her maid the slightest harm, because Sophie had often before heard great ladies swear.

Then, of course, Mrs. Adair had to write a note, which old-fashioned and irksome task served largely to abate her desire to see her niece. It was worded as if addressing a little girl of ten years.

When, in response, Miss Hale appeared before luncheon at her aunt's rooms at the hotel, Mrs. Adair declared she never was so astonished in all of her life.

"There's really nothing unnatural in my having grown a little in twelve years, Aunt Frances," said the girl; and Mrs. Adair took a fancy to her broad *a* on the spot.

"I expected a closely what-do-you-call-it—"

"—foliated?" suggested the girl, in all seriousness. Mrs. Adair stared, and then went on:

"I suppose so—well, anyhow, I was looking for a little green bud, my dear, and behold a rose full blown!"

Candace was tall and slight, with dark hair drawn tightly back from her temples. Her face was pale and curiously immobile. It was a face quite without any humorous lines, the mouth suggestive of years of repression. She sat very still and straight in her chair; without embarrassment, but also without grace or ease. She made no gestures when she spoke, which to her aunt was little short of a miracle; as, handcuffed, Mrs. Adair herself would have been dumb.

After examining her badly—but neatly and expensively—dressed niece for ten minutes, Mrs. Adair said abruptly:

"If you'd allow yourself such an impropriety, my dear, you'd be quite pretty." The sudden flush that came to the

girl's face, and the startled look that flew to the big, serious blue eyes, reminded her aunt strongly of sister Jane.

It was probably the delicious sensation of shocking her niece, combined with the desire to superintend the development of the girl's masked good looks, that made Mrs. Adair say, after one long, expedient pause given over to mental lead-heaving:

"Candace—*weird name that!* Where on earth did your mother find it?"

"The Bible, Aunt Frances."

"Oh, well, that's not my long suit, you know," laughed Mrs. Adair. "But what I started to say was this: How would you like to go across with me? I've got to see my dressmaker. My waist is two inches larger, and my hip measure—well, never mind. Facts are facts. Disgusting—this getting old and obese!"

"I should be delighted, Aunt Frances. My carriage is waiting below," replied Candace quietly, half-rising from her chair.

"Good gracious, child, I don't mean 'across' your beloved old Common—there really are one or two other spaces in the world! I mean across that nasty old Atlantic Ocean, in which I have sunk many things besides hope. My dressmaker doesn't live *here*; she lives in Vienna. I have to see her about once in two years. I go to Paris only for tea-gowns and nightgowns, and other demimondish filigree things. French women are generally so hideous that they've got to dress to distract attention from themselves—thank the Lord and my masseuse I haven't quite reached that level yet!"

"Europe, Aunt Frances?" cried Candace incredulously, with distended eyes.

"That's the family name—yes," laughed her aunt.

"It has been the dream of my sleeping hours, the inspiration of my wakings——"

"How like Jane!" muttered Mrs. Adair to herself, adding hastily: "The voice I mean, the inflection, and that broad *a*! I know I'm going to be awfully proud of that broad *a* of yours! Well, anyway, will you go?"

"Oh, Aunt Frances, if one is suddenly struck dumb before a life motive——"

"Now, don't talk that way to me, Candace Hale—I can't stand it, once for all! If you've got one of those clammy, Massachusetts motives concealed about your person, for mercy sakes keep it out of sight, as you would a—a birthmark!"

Then Candace did an extraordinary thing; she suddenly burst out laughing, and then and there her aunt began to love her.

"Money is the thing to talk about, not motives. I don't intend paying for you, my dear; I want that fully understood. You're quite rich enough to pay your own bills. For my part, I've never been rich enough for that practise! I dare say this minute you don't owe a *sou marqué*!"

"It's only the twenty-third, Aunt Frances, and my house-bills are rendered monthly," replied the girl, smiling, wonderfully stimulated by the still handsome, alert, exquisitely gowned woman who sat before her.

"Think of that!" confided her aunt to a square yard of blue sky visible from the window of her bedroom, where Candace had removed her wraps.

Just as they reentered the tiny drawing-room, Mrs. Adair ejaculated over her shoulder:

"Bridge?"

"What, Aunt Frances? I don't understand."

"Do you play?"

"I've been studying for seven years and practising regularly, but I can't really say that I play well enough to——"

"Studying *seven* years and don't yet play! Then you never will, my child. It's a special sense. Give it up, for I won't be practised on, once for all!"

Candace looked bewildered at this outburst, and then added serenely:

"My teacher at the conservatory says the fault is in my temperament—or else it is not yet awakened—so he suggested."

"In the name of—of Genesis—what

are you talking about?" cried Mrs. Adair.

"You said play—do I play?"

"Cards—Bridge—the game! Or hasn't it got here yet?" Aunt Frances fanned herself with a newspaper, seeking relief from a sudden irritability.

"Oh, yes, it's here—there are classes and clubs, but I've never joined."

"You Boston women (and you women are Boston—there are no men here, and I, for one, don't blame them!) will form harp clubs in heaven, and hallelujah chorus choirs, and committees for the fumigation of the cloud cushions on the golden thrones, and societies for the prevention of smiling—you'll—" Mrs. Adair was off full tilt now, intoxicating herself with her own absurdities, but she was stopped by the horror in the big blue eyes before her.

"Aunt Frances!"

"Well, I'll forgive you if you'll stop calling me Frances—as your mother always used to call me by my full name. Call me Frank, please; Frank always, early and late, especially late, as your uncle will promptly tell you. By the bye, your uncle will adore you. He has that same insatiable hunger for facts. Reads columns of statistics by the hour! And yet he's not what you might call exactly mad—he has lucid moments, during which I quote frequently the old saying: there are three kinds of liars, 'plain, damned, and a statistician,' but nothing distracts him more than temporarily. Come, let's go down to lunch."

Candace gasped, but this time she was silent. She had made up her mind that later she would write declining the European trip. Her mother had always called her sister Frances "a worldling," but even she could not have in the least realized the level to which her kinswoman had fallen.

However, Candace was very lonely, and there was something both contagious and compulsory in the way Mrs. Adair assumed that the whole question was settled; and long before the luncheon was over the girl's antagonism had dwindled into a half-reluctant fascination.

As the two women entered the elevator on their return to Mrs. Adair's rooms, the latter said with the directness that Candace was beginning to find characteristic of her aunt:

"By the bye, what shall you do with your house? Rent it? Wire it? Or the Holmes people?"

"Oh, no, Cousin Prudence is always there. She would have no place to go. She has been with me, you know, ever since father died."

"Is old Prue Endicott alive yet? Think of that! I thought she had died ages ago."

The bell-boy grinned. It was such conversational fragments as these which fell to his caged lot which kept him from losing his reason.

"I suppose it gets to be a sort of automatic habit after a century or so of it straight on end."

"What does, Aunt Fra—nk?"

"Why, just going on living; I call it a bad habit myself, after a certain time —lacking in delicacy."

"Cousin Prudence is a very fine woman, Aunt Frank, and has a conchological collection that—"

"What on the top of creation is that?" burst in Mrs. Adair tartly. "Now, Candace (I can't stand that name long, how would Candy do?), please don't put on that mother's-little-comfort expression! I think patience is another name for anemia. Let's agree to roll up our sleeves and have it out, if we don't agree. But, my dear child, one thing I must say before we go one step farther: *don't* be instructive! A girl can smoke cigarettes, gamble, drink cocktails, tell 'pink' stories, ride astride, and flirt with married men, but she can neither teach nor preach! Society has a few commandments, and the chief is your 'duty toward your neighbor'—'the first and great law.'"

"Perhaps, Aunt Frances, we shall not be—be happy together. Perhaps it would be wiser for me to decline your offer, for people should be very congenial who travel together." The old severity and repression had taken possession of the girl's pale face, and her voice trembled a little.

"A Daniel come to judgment!" cried Mrs. Adair, secretly alarmed lest her niece should, after all, back out of the arrangement, thereby depriving her of a lot of rather unusual amusement which she saw looming ahead of her that coming summer.

"I didn't say, my dear, that you were obliged to do all, or any, of these reprehensible things. I only generously offered them in place of the pedagogic one I was withdrawing. You see, I know one or two long words myself when I'm cornered! Come, Candace, smile once more upon me, for I don't habitually do quite a number of these bizarre things—I leave them to women whose poverty of charm drives them to desperate extremities."

"The peacock's tail and his voice, the speed of the tortoise and his tough, portable shelter," smiled Candace; "so society has its laws of compensation, too!"

"I suppose so," came very dryly from Mrs. Adair, who was mentally balancing her niece's pretty eyes against this detestable habit of talking facts. Her reverie ended in a sudden start:

"Candace, you don't suppose Prue will take it into her head to go with us? I wouldn't go abroad with old Prue Endicott, for—well, my dressmaker's bill!"

"Cousin Prudence has chronic neuritis, and has not left the house except for a short drive in the closed carriage for many years," replied the girl, a little stiffly.

"Thank God for that!" burst out Mrs. Adair, throwing herself back in her chair; then, suddenly remembering that her standing with her niece was still in jeopardy, she added quickly: "I suppose that's the reason you've not been across before, isn't it, dear?"

"Yes, that and father's dislike to have the routine of his life disturbed; and, before that, my poor mother's invalidism," sighed her niece gently.

"Poor little girl! She hasn't had any too gay a time so far, has she? And then to end with Prue for life! Well, cheer up, the worst is yet to come—

you haven't seen your uncle yet! I, too, have had my troubles."

"I—I have not heard," murmured Candace, flushing with embarrassment.

Then Mrs. Adair leaned back and shouted. When finally she was able to control her merriment, she wiped her little brown eyes, and gasped.

"Oh, Candace, Candace, whatever effect I may have upon you, you will inevitably cripple my persiflage, I can see that! And it's my mental embroidery and my verbal drawn-work that make me so popular. I must beg one thing of you, child; just one alone—"

"That makes three already, Aunt Frank!"

"—and that is, don't believe me, ever, under any circumstances! A man believed me once—your poor uncle—and look what happened to him! As I tell him, a person who is always truthful, backward and forward, is about as interesting as the multiplication-table."

Candace yielded with shamefaced, timid reluctance to her aunt's indiscretions of conversation, but she responded fearlessly to the older woman's ravishments of toilet; the faint, dry odor of violets coming from her moving draperies; the miracle of her elaborate coiffure — dark - brown, with broad splashes of silver above the ears; her restless white hands, with their few wonderful jewels; her carefully confined figure; her clever, mobile face; and her eyes, in which lurked the undying youth of humor.

"Your uncle, be it said at once, Candace, is a good man—it's my only serious objection to him. And I assure you we are quite vulgarly happy together. Of course I see to it that he spoils me wantonly, extravagantly. The wife who fails to achieve that is beneath notice." Candace gave a little gurgle of shy laughter, becoming more and more reckless as the afternoon advanced.

"I saw at a glance that you thought that I meant that he beat me—and went on living? You don't know me—nor him, for the matter of that. Why, he's a sort of gray cathedral—without any ivy—full of holy texts and dull purple

lights, and organ obligatos—I'm not sure what they are, but he's full of 'em; and lots and lots of tablets marking where lieth the poor man's illusions, which I have from time to time slain during the past twenty years. My main object in life is to prevent his having peace of mind, for any one who has that—under seventy—has no other quality worth mentioning. Oh, but he'll adore you; just wait till you two meet! You're both of you beyond-the-violet-rays, as it were."

II.

Mr. Standish Adair, commonly called "Stand," did indeed take a violent liking to his wife's niece. So much so that he would have been more than willing to accompany the two abroad, if he had received the slightest encouragement. But the fact that he did not receive it was conspicuous even to Candace, and she made inquiries concerning the omission.

With glaring eye Aunt Frank made haste to say:

"Don't breathe such a thought in this house, Candace Hale! It's the only skeleton in our closet. Why, we teetered for months on the edge of a divorce, just because we tried to travel together ten years ago. Why, Candace, he thinks he speaks French! And his accent is the most patriotic thing about him. He persists in doing all the talking himself—won't let Sophie say one word—and doing everything himself, and doing it wrong, always! For instance, one day we started from Paris ostensibly for Aix—where do you think the happy little party brought up? Listen: I went to Libourne; my trunks to Avignon; Sophie, *en seconde*, of course, was switched off to Grenoble while she slept; your uncle got off to smoke his nine o'clock cigarette at a station where they stopped two minutes, and said so—but he mistook *deux* for *dix*, it's a little way he has; and to this day I don't know where that man was during those ninety-six hours of profound silence, only broken by a telegram, which finally reached me via

London: 'Where on earth have you gone?' No, my child, we never travel together. We alternate; he goes over one summer, Sophie and I the next. This happens to be my summer. It's better so," ended Aunt Frank sadly, immensely pleased at her niece's soft accompaniment of laughter.

"But Uncle Stand wants to come with us. He told me to feel about and let him know how he stands, Aunt Frank."

"Nonsense; he knows perfectly well what he has to do!"

"Why, what has he to do?" wondered Candace.

"Go before a notary and swear to obey me absolutely from one end of the trip to the other. That apparently seems to you a little hard, but you've never been lost, utterly lost, for four days and nights; no money, no luggage, no maid, no husband! Oh, he knows perfectly well all he has to do if he wants to go with us!" she repeated, with emphasis.

But one Sunday afternoon, about a week before they sailed from New York, Candace and her uncle were taking their weekly walk up one side of the park and down the other, when this subject again came up, and he said:

"Oh, that's not all of it, not by a jugful! Don't you let her fool you. Frank had the time of her gleeome life while she was what she chooses to call 'lost.' She has several titles for it, all alliterative and entirely fanciful. Sometimes she calls it 'Alone in Avignon,' or 'Lost in Libourne,' or 'Stranded in St. Yrieix.' It's one of her favorite fairy-stories, but a friend of ours told me the truth about it—Frank never did, you'd better believe! Why, Candace, she ate at a table d'hôte consisting of eleven Spanish neophytes and a very handsome priest, and she the only profane person present. The scholastics were ordered not to look upon the face of the siren, and they sat with downcast eyes, and the priest read aloud to them between courses. And Frank coughed delicately, and purred, and cooed, and bridled, and asked for the salt or bread—the very picture of a middle-aged co-

quette. Lord! can't you see her? And the poor little devils cast unholy goo-goo eyes at her, just because it was a sin, and she never was so pleased in all of her life—perfectly furious when my telegram discovered her! No, Candace, the truth is that I take Europe seriously, and she—well, she's just Frank wherever she is. I like galleries and museums; you'll find out that in her eyes such a taste is both affected and vulgar. You'll have to sneak off with Sophie. Then she travels with three enormous trunks, and I with one suitcase—one has to have another suit in case it rains—and one is quite enough, too. I won't be dragged to operas, and dinners, and soirées, and embassies and things; I won't, so there!"

"Things are always so much older and more worth while than people, aren't they, Uncle Standish? One's own generation is always commonplace, isn't it?"

Mr. Adair grunted an emphatic assent as he looked askance at the young girl striding along beside him; everything she said was so alien to his own environment, so friendly and sympathetic with his inner life.

"It won't be worth while to travel much longer, as far as people are concerned. I had a long talk the other day with a Persian on the possibilities ahead of radium, and he knew lots more about it than I did, but I put up a good bluff, of course."

The "cathedral" effects on which his wife dwelt in Uncle Standish's character and bearing failed to impress Candace. She found that this characterization was but another of her aunt's mental redundancies. He was just an earnest, honest, hard-working, successful merchant, clean of heart and body, with no diseased tissues or nerves putting vicious demands upon him. He preferred water to whisky, a good book to a bad, facts to fancies, peace to noise, a mountain brook to the golf-links. He loved two things—his wife all the year, and his fishing-rod from February to September. He had two regrets, one that their only child had died in her infancy; the other that Frank was not a

little more, a very little more, like what he thought she was when he married her—which happens to many husbands.

Candace became very fond of him during the month that she spent with the Adairs in New York, before she and her aunt sailed.

She had long ago yielded to the anomalous fascinations of her aunt, but in her heart she cherished a genuine love for her uncle, such as she had always been ready to pour out upon her cold, silent father, who demanded nothing of people, and gave nothing.

"I do wish, Uncle Stand, you'd consent to go before that notary," coaxed Candace, the night before they left, as the two sat alone in his library over his second cigar.

"So she's told you?" laughed he—rather shamefaced. "Well, I never will, while there's one spark of manhood left in me! Either I run the show, or I won't go—to be run by Sophie or any other woman. There's nothing the matter with my French; I have a natural gift for languages—but every other person in Europe is deaf, and those between are stupid, so now and then there's a slight misunderstanding. But"—he lowered his voice and leaned toward her, looking very sly and boyish—"I'll tell you what I'll do, Candace. If you find you're not allowed to see pictures and churches, and cemeteries and things; or if you get tired of the whole business, and want to go off to the mountains with me and pick flowers, and watch sunsets——"

"Oh, Uncle Stand!" cried the girl, in frank delight at the prospect.

"—you just cable me two words—let me see—'Lonely' and 'Candace.' I'll understand, and come over as fast as steam can get me there—that is, after I've had one try at the Pool. They won't rise much before September fifteenth, but this summer they say is going to be a cool one, and I've seen 'em rise freely at a Silver Doctor as early as the twelfth—fact!"

"Mining-stocks, Uncle Stand?" asked the girl absent-mindedly.

He clapped his fat hands on his fat legs and laughed gleefully, his little

gray eyes completely lost in small cañons of flesh. Such a dear, dapper, warm-hearted, boyish little uncle—she laughed, too, for very love of him. And then he began to "talk trout," and it was after midnight when Sophie was sent down by her busy mistress to rescue her niece.

"He was talking fish, you poor child! Oh, I know—you look it! He has no conscience whatever. It's absolute monomania! No wonder Izaak Walton's first wife won the epitaph she got—did you ever read it? Remind me some day, and I'll show you—'adorned with such true Humility, and blest with so much Christian Meekness,' and so forth—these epitaph compliments strike me as a trifle tardy from that old brute of an Izaak, who probably broke her heart. Did your uncle get out his fly-books? Yes, I thought so! And spinners, and triple-repeating reels, and floats, and spoons, and rods, and winches, and—oh, Candace, did he tie his leaders for you, and show you the double 'water-knot'? And introduce his Parmachenee Belles, and Red Ibises, and that beastly little thing that looks like a tuft plucked from an Irishman's beard? Oh, what's its name?"

"Brown hackle?" ventured the girl sleepily.

"That's the bird! What a memory! That's what comes of a college education, I suppose. And did he tell you how he landed that six-and-a-half-pound trout on his two-ounce rod—pardon me, his two-ounce Orvis rod—in twenty-eight minutes? Ha! I knew it. When the clock struck twelve, and I suddenly remembered that you hadn't kissed me good night, I said to Sophie: 'Sophie, Mr. Adair's got that poor child in the library alone, and he's telling her about that six-and-a-half-pound trout; fly down instantly, and gather up the quivering remains, and bring them to me,' didn't I, Sophie?"

"Yes, madame," said the maid, with her dry, little French giggle, for her mistress exacted applause even from her servants. Many a maid had been sent on her way wondering at her failure to please, simply because she had

failed to appreciate and respond to Mrs. Adair's sense of humor; and many another maid had also gone on her way wondering, because she had appreciated too keenly that same sense of fantastic humor. Sophie's French tact had managed to keep the parlous balance for seven years, and she had come to be looked upon as one of the principal members of the family. She was a tiny, plump, immaculately neat creature, with small black eyes; and in her middle-aged heart she cherished an unfed appetite for drama.

At the last moment before leaving the house, Mrs. Adair and her niece were solemnly given their respective letters of credit by Mr. Adair, who had a fathomless disrespect for woman's business capacity. He had sent for his wife and Candace to come to the library, and he sat before his desk radiating advice. The two women stood before him, equipped, hatted, and veiled for the voyage.

Aunt Frank whispered to Candace behind her hand: "I feel like a little Sunday-school scholar getting an illuminated *pome* for 'attendance excellent,' don't you? Yes, dear," she went on aloud to her husband, "I do understand, truly and really! I've only run eight or nine of 'em in my time," she whispered again, "but it flatters him to consider me inferior, and it doesn't really disturb me. Yes, Stand, I wrote it down; if in trouble, cable 'cash'? Is that it? And now, please, teacher, may I go out and get a drink of water?" she ended, in the treble whine of a boy of six.

"Oh, go 'long with you, Frank! You're enough to drive a man mad with your monkey tricks. Will you never quiet down?"

"Yes, down into my grave some day, and then—when you've married that ideal Number Two which every husband secretly cherishes, you'll begin to appreciate me!"

Mrs. Adair had gone over to her husband and stood stroking his gray hair, and the look that passed between them brought the ignorant girl, watching them, her first startled realization

of the profound affection existing between the two. It was all so new to her experience, so involved; their bantering, their separate confidences, their endless analysis one of the other. Candace did not know life well enough to recognize, under many contradictory forms, the obsession of a great conjugal love.

"And, Uncle Stand, you will come over and take me away to the dear, 'unassuming commonplace of nature' which we both love so?" whispered Candace to him as he kissed her good-by on the steamer.

"Far from gay cities and the ways of men?" he whispered back; "and we won't ask Frank, and, Candace, you wouldn't mind my bringing a rod along, would you? I'd like to try some American 'dressing' in the Black Forest, instead of their everlasting spiders and dry flies."

"Bring two rods!" was her reckless reply.

III.

If any one had prophesied to Mrs. Adair that that summer she would be discovered in Venice as late as the end of May, the soothsayer, if an amateur, would undoubtedly have been laughed at behind his back; if a professional, would have been openly repudiated with jeers.

Nevertheless, there she was, and Candace her niece, and Sophie her maid, and a letter of credit still, with a rather surprising balance in her favor, considering that she went there from Vienna.

Candace had begged for one glimpse of Italy before going north for the summer, and, as Venice was the most accessible Italian town, thither they had gone via Trieste.

"I'll stay one week, Candace, but not one second over that; I loathe the place, and always did. I knew a woman once who stayed here a month, and has been swivel-eyed ever since! Not a straight line in the town, and all the pictures skied, so that no one remaining in even a half-way decent posture can see them. And then, somehow, it has al-

ways failed to thrill me to go after dinner and drink my little *demi-tasse* on the sidewalk, even in front of a cathedral! And for all any one either knows or cares what one has on, in this hole, we might as well dress in gunny-sacks trimmed with bands of turkey-red; and just think of the heavenly things we've got in our trunks! So, my dear, one week from to-day will see us flitting northward. Now, trot along and trifle with your optic nerves; they're your own, and I suppose you have a right to destroy them if you choose."

But as five weeks later they were still in Venice, one naturally searches for that element of the unexpected called fate.

It was to be seen from the Riva della Schiavoni, unless the mist came in from the sea, and it was glistening white, with here and there a bit of brass flashing in the sunlight; and it floated the flag of an alien people across the sea.

The American war-ship reached Venice the very next day after Mrs. Adair did, and she and the captain had met at a dinner at the consul's two nights later, and from that had grown up a very pleasant relationship among these exiled compatriots. Mrs. Adair considered the whole experience a very fortunate one for her niece; a sort of formative social drill preparatory to the real battle ahead of her during the campaign which her aunt was planning for the coming winter in New York.

Candace had been quite impossible at first, in the eyes of Aunt Frank. The girl either became very shy and self-conscious when a man spoke to her, or looked sullen and combative—she had even been seen to blush! She was altogether lacking in what her aunt called charm, and in sore need of exactly the sort of companionship these pleasant young officers offered; Americans, and so, of course, to be trusted with one's girls. "It's just a stroke of my usual good luck—where men are concerned," Mrs. Adair wrote, and heavily underlined, to her husband.

One night, when Lieutenant St. John, the ship's navigator, was calling on them, Mrs. Adair said:

"Do you know, I think it's an awfully funny thing, Mr. St. John, but I've never met an American naval officer before in my life till I came here; and yet I've known several English and Russian officers—— Oh, yes, and some Germans, too." And St. John replied very gravely:

"In both China and the United States, the purely military class ranks far below the merchant, and for the same reason."

Candace was watching him, and so caught the quiet twinkle in his usually serious brown eyes, and replied quickly:

"The peony is the national flower of China, and it stands for wealth; is that what you mean?"

"Exactly! And only when that is threatened does either country turn its attention and its sentiments toward those whose profession it is to defend. Countries that are sensitive to offense in other than material directions grade the military class differently."

"I don't know anything about all that, but I do know that I think you are all a charming lot of men, and I wish we had met sooner," said Mrs. Adair crisply.

St. John arose instantly and bowed with exaggerated effusion:

"Ah, you have at last put into words, madame, what I've long thought and dared not say!" And so it ended in a laugh.

St. John was one of several of the officers who had fallen into the way of dropping in at Mrs. Adair's apartments at the hotel almost every day, on one excuse or another. It added greatly to their pleasure to have a tall, distinguished-looking, well-bred fellow like that at their beck and call. And then he seemed equally pleased to be with either Mrs. Adair or Miss Hale, and that was not without its influence on the situation. And, as he stayed just as long, talked as freely, pottered about in gondolas just as far with one of the women as with the other, happiest, apparently, when with both of them, Mrs. Adair adjudged him just about a perfect sort of companion for her half-developed niece, who knew everything under

the sun but the important things, who could have passed a brilliant examination in the laws governing inorganic matter, but at twenty-four believed that men meant what they said to women.

So it came to pass that the two women held a little court of their own that summer in Venice, and the weeks flew by. Mrs. Adair honestly thought that she remained on Candace's account, to thaw out several frozen generations in the girl; in reality, she herself had found a new and extremely attentive audience to listen to her stories, and before whom to parade her Viennese gowns. The weather remained delightfully cool, and combined with everything else to delay their departure.

Perhaps no more violent antithesis to Candace's past life could have been discovered than these rainbow-tinted days and wonderful nights, when unrealities became commonplace.

Externally, the desired blooming process in Candace was also very satisfactory, all but the waist-line, which proved obstinate. With tears in her eyes, Candace denied the accusation of wilfulness.

"Perhaps, Aunt Frank, it's the gymnasium exercise. I used to turn wheels on the bars; it was rather a specialty of mine."

"Sounds like a vaudeville person! Well, let's be thankful your feet stayed on the right end of you. This physical culture craze! It's the last expiring effort of hideous women, who, having failed in one sex, make a wild grab to try the other. If I had my way, I'd abolish all female colleges, and revive, instead, the old worship of Venus, love, beauty, charm; and I'd put the main temple in your native town, too, Candace, where it's most needed; and then perhaps a few men might be induced to stray back home again! I was in your city during those four days when I discovered you—seems ages ago, doesn't it?—and I counted fourteen hundred newsboys and seventeen men. When the newsboys grow up, I mean to go back!"

Mrs. Adair's persistent digs at her niece's birthplace had at first been deep-

ly, if silently, resented by Candace, but she was beginning to understand her aunt's "drawn-work," and could now laugh with the rest of the world at her absurdities. It was but one of the many changes taking place within the girl. But the greatest of all came with learning to dance.

Mrs. Adair had never even suspected any deficiency in her pupil, until one night there was a ball at the Procurate given to a visiting prince, and Candace was overheard saying in French to an Italian officer bowing low before her: "But I don't know how to dance, monsieur; I have never learned."

It was a great shock to her aunt, and after a painful moment spent in recovering her nerve, she looked up and beckoned to St. John, who was passing. He joined her at once with one of his flowery compliments expressive of his delight and pride at the summons, and sat smilingly awaiting her pleasure. Mrs. Adair turned her head so that her niece, sitting on her left, should not hear.

"Mr. St. John, will you do something for me?"

"It is done, my lady!"

"Oh, no, it's not as easy as that. It may take weeks."

"That but doubles my pleasure," went on the man beside her, his brilliant uniform somehow emphasizing the sadness in his eyes and bringing out the silver patches in his hair, fast thinning above his temples.

"Do you suppose some of you men on the ship could teach my poor niece how to waltz? I give you fair warning it is a big favor. The poor child, I've just discovered, doesn't know how. I was just reconciling myself to the fact that she didn't know how to flirt, but this new ignorance is simply awful! I'd like to keep the disgrace in the family, as it were; and of course I'd rather strangle her outright than let her learn any but the American step. Do you suppose little Mr. Tipping would undertake it? Or Doctor Pressley? Which of the two has the best step? I wish you'd sound them for me, and let me know as soon as possible. I can't

play on the piano and drag her around, too, or I wouldn't trouble you about it; and Sophie's waltz smacks of Montmartre, I suspect. Do you suppose they'd mind, just once or twice?"

"They wouldn't mind, Mrs. Adair, but I should! I should be very jealous of any such privilege, I assure you."

"But you never dance!"

"No, but I haven't forgotten how," he asserted, looking away from her an instant; and then adding in his most elaborate fashion: "May I consider the honor mine, exclusively mine?"

"Oh, you sailors, what rogues and knaves you are!" cried Aunt Frank gaily, wishing that Stand was there to see for himself how popular she and Candace were, since written evidence had so little weight with him.

"I'll subtract ninety-nine per cent. from your fine speeches, Mr. St. John, and keep a grateful clutch on one per cent. When can you come?"

"To-morrow. A sailor never postpones happiness."

"Good! At four? And then we'll row out to Torcello afterward, and of course you'll return and dine with us."

"There was no need, I assure you, of future baiting—I should have taken the bare hook gladly; but since it is dangled before me so temptingly, I warn you, in turn, I'm going to bite."

"You are really such a comfort to me! All of you officers are. There are so few men I could throw my child-like Candace with so intimately, and never even think of the consequences."

"We're such birds of passage, even we ourselves don't expect to be taken seriously," he said lightly.

"And yet I suppose each of you has a serious side; now you, for instance—"

"Oh, I dare say, I dare say," cried St. John, rising, apparently not having caught her last words. "May I take Miss Hale to the window at the end of the corridor?—the view is exquisite. After such a string of Italian, perhaps a little home fare will be good for her." And presently the two walked off together, leaving the great, brilliant ball-

room full of movement and light, the music and laughing faces.

From half-past four to half-past five on the following afternoon, Mrs. Adair was officially not at home. But, in fact, she sat at the piano in her spacious salon at the hostelry on the Grand Canal, and vigorously banged waltzes and two-steps, her eyes over her shoulder watching the progress of the other two.

Candace was slightly paler than usual, from sheer excitement; St. John very serious, gentle, and wonderfully patient.

She was not proving at all easy to teach.

"You're thinking of yourself, you'll never learn that way," he said once.

"Whom should I think of?" laughed the girl excitedly. And Aunt Frank rejoiced in her heart and was exceedingly glad. She'd be a success yet!

"Think of the music, and what it says, what it bids you do. Every muscle in you is tense with repression, not expression," he scolded gently. She looked at him with sudden gravity, and dropped her eyes.

Ah, if he, or any one else, could but dream what some music bade her do!

The nymph's dance in Schumann's great symphony, when, between her and the sawing black-and-white orchestra, there seemed to float in mid-air a long, swaying pale-green garland of half-clad girls, holding hands, laughing, tip-toeing along in tiny, tiny steps; and then suddenly came a change in the time, and the long wreath of nymphs broke apart into single pink roses, and she—poor white-faced Candace—was one of them, and with them reeled to and fro as if driven by the wind, and then slowly they began spinning themselves into a still madder frenzy, faster and faster, until the line between sound and motion merged and became no longer definable, and everything given life seemed working toward some vague climax of ecstasy very close at hand, just a few steps more—but never reached!

And yet this man asked her "what music bade her do"?

"Come, now, my dear Miss Hale, I did not mean to offend you, you know that," St. John coaxed, taking her hand once more and holding it for an instant.

"Oh, it isn't that; you're only too kind," she murmured, quickly withdrawing her hand; "it's something very different. It's that music bids me do—all sorts of things, but I have never thought of obeying it."

"What are you two scrapping about? Do your fighting later, please; here I am wasting one of Waldteufel's best!" scolded Aunt Frank from the piano, absorbed in smoothing out the wrinkles in a three-bar run without losing time.

"Well, Miss Hale, obey it for once, and see what'll happen. Now, try once more—let yourself go! It would be a sorry old world to live in if every fellow snubbed his impulses as you do." And then for the first time she caught the swing of the waltz, and the dancing-master felt that he would succeed in his task; and over her pretty, dark head he smiled and nodded encouragement to Mrs. Adair, who was at last mistress of the three-bar run, and looking over her shoulder.

Through some mysterious law of mental chemistry, the yielding of herself that afternoon to the waltz's *tempo* was filled with a tremendous significance to Candace, undreamt of by either her aunt or St. John. She found herself standing on the brink of an entirely new world; brought into sudden illuminating relations with people, and with life's traditions. With all of her study and reading she had never understood pleasure, nor sympathized with its many votaries. And here she was discovering that those fantastic ideas of hers that had always come to her while listening to certain music, and of which she had been so ashamed, were, after all, only the instinct of dancing, which has existed since the beginning of time! Perhaps more of her impulses, hidden out of sight, came under some such very general, very respectable, head. There had been no one to talk to, since Cousin Prue particularly disliked young people about, because they got on her nerves.

And so it came to pass that although Candace could have written a fair treatise on the subject of sociology, she stood dumb and agape before society and its simplest usages.

She had been excitedly pouring out to St. John all of this and more, one afternoon coming back from Murano, in Mrs. Adair's gondola. Ciro, the old gondolier, flattered himself that he knew when to go fast and when to go slow; that day he rowed very, very slowly.

St. John had listened at first to Candace's unwonted self-revelations with his eyes turned away from her, for in them lurked a smile that he feared might wound her; but as the story of her half-starved, wholly repressed emotional life went on, it seemed infinitely pathetic to him, and he turned and watched the pale, excited girl beside him, talking out her soul to him, as he felt sure she never had talked to any one before in all of her days.

"You said one has a right to obey some of one's impulses, that they are not all bad," she laughed; "so I'm going to tell you one more of mine, and see if you can tabulate it."

"Tell me," said he, much as one would to a happy child.

"There used to be a naughty little sprite who met me in the woods, years ago, before Cousin Prudence became house-ridden, when we went to the mountains in summer."

"Male or female?" sternly demanded the mentor.

"Prudence? 'Twas ever feminine!"

"I mean the sprite."

"Oh, I never thought which it was! I never really saw him—"

"Ah, ha, you're caught!"

Candace blushed as if accused of a crime, and hurried on with her story: "The sprite was always waiting for me in an open, mossy, sunlit space on the edge of the lake, opposite the White Face Cliff; you know the kind of place I mean?"

"Yes, I know."

"Well, the things that little imp made me do! I've been dreadfully ashamed of them for years and years, and here

I am telling you—telling any one! I wonder if that marks a step forward or backward in my small career?"

"Other things besides water are kept pure by motion," he replied, with suitable solemnity.

"I never could sing, Mr. St. John; have no voice that I'm aware of, and you know only too well that I never could dance; well, the forest imp made me do both! I used to whirl madly about over the soft moss, and sing at the top of my lungs till my whole body shook. There wasn't any tune, just a sort of necessity to get that amount of sound out of myself, much as some noisy canaries do. Did you ever hear of anything so absurd!"

St. John laughed, and old Ciro hummed softly to himself, keeping time with the creak of the oar-lock.

"And then when the shadows were deepening and I knew that I must go, I used to stand where I could see the sky and reach up my arms and cry aloud: 'Oh, you beautiful world! Can you hear me? Do you care that I love you?' And then—I don't believe I can tell you the rest!"

"Oh, yes, tell me," he murmured.

"And then—it was the echo, you will say, but I know it was my mischievous sprite—the words 'I love you, love you,' would come back to me, and—and, well, that was my tryst, the only one, and I never told any one before; because other girls have real things happen to them, real words said to them, and no one would understand. But you understand, somehow—and I promised to tell you the very worst, you know!"

"An affair with an echo—God help me, I wish it was my worst!" he burst out, his face suddenly looking old and ugly. But she was full of her revelations, and asked, after one quick look at him:

"Under what category do such impulses as that of the echo come? Make it as respectable as you can, please."

"What do you think yourself?"

"Well, I think it was loneliness."

"That general heading will do, although a subdivision suggests itself to me."

"Yes?"

"I'll tell you, if you'll answer me a question—absolutely truthfully."

She agreed, and he told her that the longing for human love at the root of her loneliness he considered an extremely respectable impulse, even more so than her innate love, recently discovered, of dancing. She sat listening, almost overwhelmed with embarrassment as he talked half in earnest, half-bantering. He saw that she did not even recognize the extreme intimacy of her own revelation, and suddenly he made up his mind not to ask the question he had intended; somehow, this little flirtation was not fair. Under ordinary circumstances, and with his equal at the game, it would have been vastly diverting, but this girl was something quite apart from the ordinary run of young women he met and amused himself with, whenever and wherever his ship anchored. He determined as he sat there beside her that afternoon to put a stop to it; to let the other men on the ship take his place in the Adair household. It was high time; he felt that he was drifting, and it must of necessity be upon the rocks.

"And now, Mr. St. John, that I have raised my veil—"

"And I have seen Medusa and lived!" he laughed.

"—I think you owe me the same privilege. Did you use to do foolish things when you were young?" He watched her with a certain gravity for a moment, and then said abruptly:

"It's hard to remember your degree of B. A., Miss Hale, your heart is still on a milk-and-gruel diet. How did you manage it?"

"Aunt Frank lays the responsibility for all my many deficiencies at poor Cousin Prudence's door, so we may as well put that there with the rest!"

So all their talk ended only in a laugh, and then presently Ciro brought them to the hotel-landing; even going his very slowest, he had to arrive some time!

During the following week there were three of the officers of the American cruiser who divided among them

Candace's days and evenings. Doctor Pressley claimed her mornings so impiously that even Miss Hale did not dispute his right. Churches were apparently his soul's delight, and Candace's head whirled at his flow of information. He was a man of facts, ignoring sequences, correlations, and all other trifling details. He was tall, slight, stooping, blond, and had cataracts, which may have accounted for his lack of humor.

Then Ensign Tipping, known as "Puck" among his messmates, took possession of the ladies' afternoons, ready for expeditions of any and all sorts which required no exercise, to which he was as opposed as Mrs. Adair herself. Little Tipping made open avowals of love to Candace after the first week, upon all occasions in public or private, unabashed, apparently, by her gentle ridicule. He was short and fat, and so ruddy of countenance that even the most pathetic of his appeals failed to carry any conviction whatever.

He would say to Mrs. Adair, in her niece's presence:

"Some day, when the worst comes to the worst, she'll be sorry she turned me down! And then I, noble youth, will return and forgive her, raise her drooping form, and reward her with my hand, and we'll live in utter wretchedness and extreme poverty ever after. This is a prophecy—and deserves at least respect."

And the third man was Lieutenant Eeling, a very quiet, sympathetic young fellow, who always accompanied Tipping when he made evening calls, and who generally played piquet with Mrs. Adair during the entire visit, although now and then feeling obliged to throw a subduing remark at his incorrigible companion.

When her day was over, Candace used sometimes to smile half-quizzically at herself in the glass and murmur:

"After all, my echo in the woods still remains the best lover I ever had!"

When a week passed before St. John again called, a strong reaction of regret and self-abasement took possession of Candace. She recalled with anguish

her foolish confession, and remembering his silence, assumed his disgust.

IV.

By a miracle, none of the other officers were there the first time that St. John again called. It was quite late in the evening when his card came up. To Mrs. Adair's surprise Candace, who had been reading beside her, sprang up, asking her aunt to excuse her, and then hastily left the room.

After her first greeting, Mrs. Adair said to St. John:

"My niece has gone to bed some time since with a bad headache. I, personally, marvel that she's alive! She and the doctor did seven this morning—churches, I mean. They're making a pilgrimage of all of them, and I've negotiated for a neat and inexpensive tomb in which to place her remains in the last of them. Ridiculous folly! As I told Doctor Pressley, spinal-menigitis is prevalent enough, without deliberately courting it by taking liberties with one's center of gravity. What do you think he said? 'I fear, Mrs. Adair, you misunderstand the nature of that disease.' And I knew from that that he's a perfectly safe man to trust with my niece. One can always tell from little things like that."

St. John wondered how she had told in his own case. He believed he would ask her, just for fun, but she was in one of her most expansive moods, and he could not get a word in edgeways.

"The woman; Mr. St. John, who believes that her husband loves her after twenty years, is a fool; the woman who says so, lies! Listen to this! After twenty-one years of unrelieved faithfulness, too!" Mrs. Adair reached out for a letter lying on the table, carefully put on her pince-nez, and then talked over it: "Mind you, this is the first letter I've had from my accredited Romeo for ten days, and I'm reading you every syllable! In the one confounded spot below the apron that I wrote you about, where anything in the fish line rises this month, there's only

room for one boat, and a Pig from Philadelphia has held it for a week. No matter what time the rest of us get up, he and his guide are there serenely fishing! Monday I got mad, I got up at five—he was there; four o'clock, Pig already there; half-past three, looked as if he'd been born there! To-night old Dave and I are going to sleep in my boat anchored on the spot. Since that's the game, we'll see if two can't play it! If I get a record fish, I'll cable. You remember that six-pound-nine-ounce trout I told you about in my last letter? Well, I made a mistake about him—it wasn't the barber who caught him, it was the Pig! The barber only carried him over to the Landing to be mounted. And now, to cap everything, the Pig refuses to enter the fly he used in the record! Love to Candace. Ever faithfully yours, S. A." And that man promised to love, honor, and cherish me at the altar!" added Mrs. Adair, "and copied poetry—thank God, he never wrote any—and once, long ago, he wrote daily letters—not about fish!" St. John laughingly agreed that it was a disappointing world.

And then, to the astonishment of both of them, Candace walked quietly into the room.

"I left my Symonds here, Aunt Frank; I couldn't sleep." She scarcely did more than nod to St. John, and spoke in such a detached and indifferent fashion that he was both amazed and chilled.

On her part Mrs. Adair was so absorbed with the *gaucherie* of her niece's action, that she thought of nothing but the lecture she intended to promptly administer as soon as she got a chance.

"As long as you have joined us, please remain, Candace," she said rather sternly.

"Oh, no, I didn't mean to stay! I mean, I didn't know—I—" the girl stopped, dumb with confusion.

"Didn't know that I was here?" asked St. John cheerfully.

"Oh, yes, I knew it; but—"

"Candace, is your head worse?" interrupted her aunt, in a tone calculated to steady the girl's nerves.

"My head? There's nothing the matter with my head, Aunt Frank."

Mrs. Adair groaned; there were moments when she felt discouraged about her niece.

"Frescos are the matter with it! I knew you'd have some brain trouble before morning. Do you suppose, Mr. St. John, if I rang I could get a few leeches?" He laughed, and moved toward her, holding out his hand.

"Nonsense, you're not going yet!" protested Mrs. Adair.

"Oh, such incorruptible honesty deserves to be rewarded," he replied gaily. "Good night, Mrs. Adair; good night, my fair truth-teller, even though you wound my vanity, you win my admiration in this world of lies." The girl stood watching him with big, smileless eyes, which, against her will, had thus sought to abate something of her self-laceration, adrift as she was in an unknown sea of emotions. But it had not helped her to come and see him laughing, had not helped her at all; and somehow it had offended Aunt Frank. The girl's upbringing had killed off even the normal growth of vanity, and that her exits and entrances could be matters of any moment never entered her mind. So she bowed to the man gravely and slipped out of the room.

"Has one glimmer come to you?" asked Mrs. Adair dryly, her eyes still on the door through which her niece had gone. "Can you make anything out of it but congestion of the brain?"

St. John still laughed, but was in reality deeply hurt. And in hunting about for a motive that might be balm to his wounded vanity, he suddenly thought him of one which pushed the knife in deeper.

"Doesn't it strike you, Mrs. Adair, as quite possible that the trouble lies in her heart rather than her head?"

"Candace!"

"Yes, Candace," he repeated, smiling at her. They were both standing near the small table on which lay the fisherman's screed.

"Heavenly powers, who?" ejaculated Aunt Frank, sinking into a chair, oblivious to rules of speech. "Don't tell me

you mean the doctor? It's impossible! About as lovable as a carpet-sweeper. Or little Tipping—not little Tipping? You're all perfect dears, every one of you, but absolutely out of the question matrimonially. You must all understand that—but of course you do."

"It's not what we think, it's what she thinks, it strikes me," said the man rather shortly, and then soon after he took his departure. Mrs. Adair made up her mind to study the situation carefully the very next day, and, above all, to put a quietus on that holy pilgrimage.

As St. John crossed the now deserted Piazza, he was trying to pretend to himself that he was glad that the girl's obvious indifference to him had lifted the burden from his own shoulders, and left him free to resume their pleasant relations as at first. He liked to be with her, but was afraid of drifting into an anomalous relation; he was determined to be honest with her, and yet not to tell her the whole truth. But now, after what her aunt had said, with less than her usual tact, there was no reason why he should drag in the fact that he was not a marrying man—least of all, tell either of them the reason why.

"Perhaps there is something between her and Pressley, Aunt Frank to the contrary," he murmured, as he stood waiting for the gondolier on the Piazzetta. "So much the better, so much the better!" He stepped into his gondola, which headed directly out toward his ship.

"If suffering comes out of it for me —there's no novelty in that, my gentle sirs!" said he grimly to the stars. And then his eyes swept the horizon from a sailor's strength of habit, and when they veered round to Della Salute they rested, as eyes will, till those wondrous architectural bubbles now floating on the surface, finally sink back into the sea, whence surely they arose.

V.

One exquisite morning about two weeks later a gondola shot noiselessly

out from the hotel on the Canalazzo and headed for the Lagune. This time old Ciro sent his boat flying through the water, for were not his two señoras due on the American ship at noon? While they were having their breakfast on the big white ship, he too would be having his very comfortably in the body of his gondola—his nice, black bread, and a leek or two, and his quarter of a litre of Chianti. His wife Berta, 'twas true, had the devil's own temper, but thanks be to the Blessed Virgin, she was ever a good provider!

Aunt Frank and Candace eyed each other furtively, with about an equal amount of pride and satisfaction. They had come to a complete understanding on the subject of Doctor Pressley, so Mrs. Adair's mind was once more at rest, and they had drifted on, one perfect day following another uncounted. Aunt Frank's most serious objection to Venice was removed by the presence of the American officers, for whom it was quite worth while to put on one's best, they were so boyishly enthusiastic over their countrywomen's toilets.

Candace wore that day a simply made white pongee gown with a stiff straw hat trimmed with white wings. Even the dressmakers had, in the end, to concede begrudgingly that simple lines suited her the best. She was wonderfully changed since her aunt discovered her. It was something more than a change wrought by milliners and dressmakers, great as that undoubtedly was. It was that all the parts of her personality were fast learning their correlation to the whole; it was the look of happiness that had come to her eyes, the tight compression of her lips that had yielded to a vastly becoming pliancy. She had laughed more in the last few months than during all the other days of her life; and, best of all, happiness and laughter had somehow at last justified themselves to her new vision.

Candace often thought of her poor, delicate, conscience-ridden mother; her silent, grim father; her cousin Prudence, wandering confused and smileless in a wilderness of trifles; then the

dear, idle, laughing foolishness of her present life stole over her, like an insidious drug taking possession of her senses one by one.

"The ship looks more than ever like a big phantom white bird, doesn't it, Aunt Frank? This low-hanging mist gives a touch of unreality to things. Oh, look! We can see the flag now! Slowly coiling and uncoiling itself as if it were a big snake lazily showing off its strength to remind careless people that they'd better not tread thoughtlessly!"

Mrs. Adair turned and looked at the happy, excited face beside her, and decided that she could not have done better than she had. These young, wholesome, gay compatriots over there on the ship were safe companions for the girl until—the prince should come next winter. What Mrs. Adair said was:

"I feel sort of bubbly inside, too, whenever I see our flag abroad, for I say to myself: 'You could be an international issue before morning, if you liked!' And the bare possibility puffs me with pride."

"I don't think it makes me proud—I feel much more like crying."

"Don't! Don't ever! Always a mistake! Loses your hold on people's sympathies at once. Anybody will hold a gurgling, giggling baby for hours; let her give one single whimper, and her admirers melt away like snow in April. Oh, look, Candace, there they are, waiting for us! How nice little Tipping looks in uniform! And there's the doctor!"

At the head of the gangway stood Eeling and Tipping, while running down the ladder was the young surgeon, whose guests the two ladies were that day. He raised his cap to them as their gondola slipped silently beneath the ship's gangway.

"So good of you to come, Mrs. Adair," cried he, reaching down a long, strong arm and bracing himself.

"Don't commit yourself till you see my appetite!" she replied gaily, gathering up all her energies for what seemed to her an extremely perilous undertaking. Once on the gangway-platform,

she clung relentlessly to the doctor, and good-natured little Tipping, watching from above, saw the dilemma, and, slipping down the ladder to Mrs. Adair, he took charge of her, while the doctor offered his hand to Candace, who lightly sprang to the gangway. The doctor had Candace for a moment to himself, and made the most of it.

"Let's go to the *Ausstellung*, at the Gardens, after breakfast to-day. Would your aunt like to?"

"I'm sure she wouldn't," laughed Candace.

"Well, then, suppose we go to see the 'Sapienza'; you know you spoke of it. And to-morrow, as soon as I can get off, we might go to San Zaccaria, to see the only Bellini we haven't seen. I won't have a chance to get a word in edgewise, once we get on deck."

"Oh, please, Doctor Pressley, not quite so fast! You are very kind, but I can't plan quite as far ahead. Perhaps we can coax Aunt Frank to go to the art exhibition this afternoon by telling her that the ices and music are good, and not breathing a syllable about the pictures."

"Well, that'll be lots better than nothing," said the doctor resignedly. He had not yet analyzed his feelings toward Miss Hale; he only knew that each morning he felt that it was an absolute necessity to see her before night. The few hours he reserved to himself when off duty were spent in his room studying Venice, deliberately, dispassionately, and quite without enthusiasm. Of art he knew nothing and cared less, but as a humble means to a great end he did not disdain its aid.

As the two stepped over the side they discovered Aunt Frank on the quarter-deck surrounded by a wreath of officers, all of them wearing that flattering expression of concentrated devotion and almost breathless interest, so apt to be overestimated by the newcomer among them, so well understood by the initiated. Bachelor, affianced, benedick, widower, or divorced, this delightful perfidy of manner does not vary one whit, when a sailor is *en garçon*.

And presently the captain came on

deck to pay his respects to Mrs. Adair, and the wreath of blue-clad men turned and promptly twined itself about Miss Hale, and spent upon her its knavish blandishments. And the only men who stood silent and apart were the two who were really interested in the girl.

Looking about, Candace quickly noted St. John's absence, and it hurt her a little, as it was her first visit to the ward-room. She felt more at ease with him than with any of the others, and for the last fortnight they had seen a great deal of each other, and were once upon very friendly terms.

When the chaffing of the others became too much for her, he had always been the one to come to her rescue, and to divert the rapiers flashing about her bewildered head. For none of them had his quick thrust, none of them was so apt to forget the button. And so—she missed him, and presently asked the doctor where he was.

"The 'Pilot' went off after breakfast. Gone over to Padua, I believe. Now, that's a place you ought to see, Miss Hale—Padua. About the best preserved medieval town in northern Italy; except, perhaps—"

"All hands on deck!" shouted Tipping, "the doctor is at it again!" which impertinence was the signal for a general verbal scrimmage, from which nothing but the announcement of luncheon by the Japanese steward rescued the ship's surgeon.

"I hope, Mrs. Adair," quoth the captain, "that you and your niece will do me the honor of coming to my cabin before you leave the ship. I'd like to show you our silver. We think it's the handsomest in the service." Then he bowed and withdrew, for it was strictly a ward-room function, and the "skipper" was, by an unwritten law, not included.

Then all the others filed down the ladder to breakfast, just as eight bells sounded.

Mrs. Adair sat in the seat of honor, on the right of the first lieutenant. Candace, looking a little frightened, was down at the other end of the ward-room table, in what is known as the "Fourth

Ward," the caterer on her left, Doctor Pressley on her right, and opposite sat all the youngsters devouring her with their eyes; for they had been on a three years' cruise, and pretty American girls were not found at every anchorage.

But she was very quiet and absent-minded, and the doctor was bitterly disappointed that she was not producing the effect on the ward-room that he had unwarily predicted.

"I'm sorry I did not know you were under the weather, Miss Hale. I would have postponed our breakfast," he said gloomily.

"Why, I'm perfectly well! I don't know what you mean." She blushed violently, and after that forced herself into another mood; she talked more, and made the others about her talk, some of the color stayed in her face, and the doctor's prophecy came true, after all.

One incident up at Mrs. Adair's end of the table Candace overheard, because the whole table listened. The conversation was begun by the paymaster, across the table from Aunt Frank. His very strident voice suddenly pierced through all the rest of the table-talk, daring Mrs. Adair to guess whether he was a married man or "a survivor," as he called it.

"Survivor of many sieges, you mean?" laughed Mrs. Adair.

"Sieges? No, madam. Far be it from any man ever to lay claim to other than unsuccessful campaigns."

The whole table was now listening, and greatly amused, for it was an unusual scene at a ward-room table, where personalities are tabooed by an ancient statute.

"The conversation of you navy men gives one so little clue!" cogitated Mrs. Adair aloud, recognizing at once what was expected of her.

"Our life is only possible in so confined a space, through that very elimination," said the first lieutenant. "It's bad enough as it is; but if we had to listen to each other's unchecked confidences, we'd go mad, every man jack of us! Brown's love-affairs, Grey's debts, White's babies' teething episodes,

Green's marital infelicities—so each man keeps his private affairs to himself, and the more private they are, the more popular the officer! Our mental reserves are kept closed as are the water-tight doors between the ship's compartments in time of danger."

"So you give me up?" persisted the paymaster.

"Oh, no, not at all," cried Mrs. Adair. "It is only that in face of what you tell me, I hesitated to open your water-tight door. Is that right?"

"I can swim, madam!"

"His impudence would float a brick house!" muttered the caterer, in Candace's ear.

Fixing her mischievous eyes upon the first lieutenant, Mrs. Adair proceeded to soliloquize aloud, all the men leaning forward with smiling faces.

"If one could forget his attractions it might be thought that he was a 'survivor,' because of the undisciplined tongue and eye; but then the phenomenal wisdom of his remarks precludes the possibility of the novice; he looks too untrammeled to have a wife—"

"Hear! hear!" came from the officer who used to be called the chief engineer in the old days when a spade was just a spade.

"Too knowing for a bachelor; too gay to have been disespoused; if he were a lover, he would not thus have pilloried himself. He"—her laughing eyes turned and dwelt upon him for an instant, and then she murmured, as if to herself:

"Through very love of self himself he slew!"

And the ward-room shouted with exceeding joy, for her intuition had found the vulnerable spot in the paymaster's heel.

So the luncheon broke up with a laugh, and Mrs. Adair never did know the facts about the paymaster's social status. At least two people at that table remembered that conversation, light as it was, as long as they lived.

While the ward-room table was being cleared, Doctor Pressley took the ladies to his stateroom, which he and his Japanese "boy" had been putting into al-

most painful order since the early breakfast.

"I want to show you a picture of my mother," said Pressley to Candace, and, although his speech was gentle, Mrs. Adair overheard it, and instantly knew him for an incipient lover; and wondered uncomfortably if by prolonging their stay in Venice she was exposing Candace to any experimental dangers. If she saw the faintest signs of it, off she would pack the girl in two hours! A marriage in the navy was about the very last she would countenance for her niece.

As they examined the doctor's stateroom—a perfect puzzle-box of small utilities—Mrs. Adair decided that at the first breath of summer, which could not be much longer delayed, she would start for the Dolomites. "Candace's kindergarten course," as she recently had written to her husband, "has been very harmless and providential. Her first shyness with men is wearing away, she is fast learning that honesty and reserve are not incompatible; and she's stopped instructing people."

As the two women gazed in wonder straight at the zenith in the doctor's little stateroom, and took in the marvel of his bath-tub hanging there like a great, leaden harvest moon, a voice from the curtained door brought them abruptly down to earth. It said:

"May I show you a picture of my baby?" and there, to their utter amazement, stood Eeling, humbly solicitous of womanly sympathy.

"And I've known that man a month!" exclaimed Mrs. Adair, sinking into the doctor's one chair.

"And I wrote Uncle Stand that he was very attentive to you, Aunt Frank!" added Candace demurely.

"After this I shall trust none of you!" announced Mrs. Adair, putting out her hand for the Eeling baby's photograph, which the doting father still proffered.

"What have they been doing?" asked another voice at the door, and there stood St. John still in his civilian's clothes, smiling in upon them. Mrs. Adair held out her other hand in greeting, but Candace only nodded briefly,

absorbed in some atrocious little amateur photographs the doctor was showing her with the insistent tenderness known only to the father of photographs and the mother of babes.

"Would you have us placarded?" protested Eeling. "A fellow must go somewhere, and if he prefers the society of women like you and Miss Hale to—to other society, I think myself he ought to be encouraged, not scolded."

"Yes, but why all this secrecy? All this mystery? Why didn't you bring your dear little girl's picture to me before, Mr. Eeling; answer me that?"

"Well, it only came yesterday, Mrs. Adair, and the old one I had of her, my wife begged me not to show any one. And then how was a fellow to suppose that either you or Miss Hale would care two centimes? Lord knows I'm ready enough to talk about my baby morning, noon, and night—"

"Just so," interpolated the doctor, over his shoulder.

—but I've always been so brutally snubbed, as you see!"

"Ah, here comes Mr. Tipping with pictures of his twins and his mother-in-law!" cried Mrs. Adair, but that young person replied, with a comical attempt at pathos:

"Alas, no! These are but the photographs of the other women who have refused me. Cheer up, Miss Candace, you are not alone!"

"And now, Doctor Pressley, unburden your Bluebeard conscience! Let us know at once where we stand, please. And you, too, Mr. St. John, I dare say—" but as Mrs. Adair raised her laughing eyes to the doorway, where he had been leaning, she found that he had disappeared.

And then Candace looked so tired that her aunt arose, and they all adjourned to the captain's cabin, where the air and the chairs were better, and where they admired an extremely rococo silver set presented by the city after which the cruiser had been named.

All the officers gathered once more on deck to see the two ladies off. St. John had shifted into uniform, and was there with the rest. A change had come

into his face; it looked, to one pair of watchful eyes, as if a veil had been dropped over it. The mouth was rigid, and somehow matched an unwonted formality of manner—if Mrs. Adair had noticed it, she would have said his water-tight door was closed.

Pressley and Tipping went with Mrs. Adair and her niece in the gondola, which headed directly for the Public Gardens, for the doctor had his way, after all, as persistent insensitive people generally do.

"Mr. St. John did not show us his stateroom," complained Mrs. Adair, a bit fatigued by the exigencies of a wardroom luncheon.

"No, he never does. He isn't much of a lady's man, you know. He's done with that sort of thing, hasn't he, Tipping?"

"As far as any of us fellows know—but he's as tight as an oyster."

"Well, I'm completely at sea about all of you," announced Mrs. Adair. "I shall either have to begin all over again with you, or else give it up and fly north. Tired, dear? Or is it the bright light? You seem so quiet," she added to Candace, who was looking out over the brilliant silver sheen of the water to the far horizon, where it melted into a sky-line also of burnished silver.

"Now, young people, I want it distinctly understood, if I go ashore to this Belle Arti thingumbob, it's to have an ice and watch the people—if the word picture is so much as whispered, we leave at once!"

VI.

The day following the breakfast St. John sent up his card to Mrs. Adair at the hotel, and soon after strolled into her cool, spacious *sala* in his usual leisurely way, and at once asked her if she and her niece would like to see the launching of an Italian ship-of-war at the Arsenal the next day but one. He had procured two tickets, and would call and take them to their places, although compelled himself by official etiquette to sit in seats assigned to his ship.

Whatever mischievous plans Mrs.

Adair may have entertained about baiting him with the newly discovered mystery of a sailor's civil standing, they faded away before this man's quiet reserve and faultless breeding, which somehow made impossible any revival of the jest of yesterday.

And on Candace's part, whatever soreness remained because of his unlooked-for desertion upon the occasion of her first breakfast on his ship, was made entirely unjustifiable and downright absurd by his cool, distant manner, bent only upon giving his compatriots a little pleasure, which he did not even pretend to share. He would take them, leave them; he hoped that they might enjoy the novelty of even a modern pageant, in waters sacred to so many quaint maritime ceremonies.

"Wouldn't you like to see it, Candace? I'm quite taken with the idea," said the aunt.

"Very much indeed," said the niece.

Soon after St. John took his leave; and neither of the two women had treated him in the least as she had intended.

That afternoon Candace, with Sophie as duenna, took the gondola and went to the art exhibition, treated the day before with such scant courtesy.

Sophie was *en dimanche*, as she herself would have said, sitting very erect and demure, but with certain added festivities to her toilet, and a decided holiday twinkle in her little black eyes.

"Do you care anything about pictures, Sophie?" asked Candace, in English. She had found Sophie's French too idiomatic, too rapid, for even the training of the *Alliance*; and for ordinary purposes had abandoned it, feeling that in so doing she was indeed on the down-grade from the exalted plateau of her former life.

Sophie gave her dry little sarcastic laugh.

"*Alors, mam'selle*; since seven I am taken to the Salon, every year! The other, the Champs de Mars, my *grand-père* did not approve of eet—of a *bizarerie*, he would say!"

"Then you will not be *ennuyée* this

afternoon, Sophie, if I take a long time?"

"But, *chère mam'selle*, the people, the music, *t'le monde en fête, enjoué!* *Non, mam'selle, je suis Française!*" Miss Hale laughed, and told the woman to keep with her for a while, and then to feel free to do as she liked.

"And where shall I find you, Mam'selle Candace?"

"In the café, please, Sophie, by the door, at half-past five. Order some tea and cake for yourself."

Sophie suppressed a little grimace of disgust at the detested word tea; but she knew of other confections more to her Gallic taste. What better for a warm May afternoon than a *glacé au fruit*? If the price was as it should be, in this land of these absurd Italians, monsters of exaggeration that they were!

They arrived at the esplanade, and old Ciro began his usual fierce defense of the prow of his gondola from the importunities of the *ganzeri* with their officious boat-hooks; and himself held his boat steady till his fares had alighted. He never used to resent the trembling ancients haunting the boat-landings, but somehow as the day approached when he himself would soon have to abandon the dignity of *poppe* and become a mere *ganza*—"a crab-catcher"—a half-mad hatred of them and their pitiful office had taken possession of the old gondolier.

As Miss Hale and Sophie walked up the garden-path to the exhibition building, old Ciro pushed off his gondola from the shore, and drifted, and smoked, and dreamed until they should summon him. He had heard all the gossip of the *quai*, he preferred to be alone. His fares would keep him waiting many hours, they had come to the art exhibition, he knew that well enough. For himself, give him the "Santa Assunta," on a Sunday afternoon in midsummer when fares were few—he wouldn't turn his oar in its socket to see the whole lot of modern daubs that so impudently came to the home of his "Assunta"! And the old gondolier chuckled mirthlessly and spat into the water.

Just as Miss Hale and her companion were walking up the steps of the building, Sophie whispered:

"*Regardez, mam'selle!* To the right—the American officer!"

Candace looked up quickly, the color running into her pale face in a flood. When she saw Doctor Pressley, she cried rapidly:

"Quick, Sophie, fly! I wish so much to be alone to-day."

"*Tenez, he is not the one!*" mentally decided Sophie, and smiled, as she had her favorites.

If two people start, even only a few minutes apart, to see an exhibition, and one of them keeps a room or two ahead of the other, the chances are that they will never meet. And so it turned out that afternoon with Candace and her faithful naval surgeon, who was there making painstaking notes of the notable pictures for her especial benefit, and deserved a better fate.

But if two people start, even an hour apart, at different ends of the longest suite of rooms, they will inevitably at least see each other—to speak is too much a matter of human volition to be safely predicted.

And St. John saw Candace quite a half-hour before she saw him, lost, as she was, in her passionate pilgrimage.

Sophie, however, had watched Lieutenant St. John out of the corner of her eye for some time, and, moreover, saw that he was aware of Miss Hale's presence, which fact so puzzled her that she determined to keep silent and await developments. It seemed to her a very extraordinary proceeding for a man who had been so intimate at their salon during all these weeks. Sophie's heart beat fast at the mystery, her head ached trying to solve the situation by any of the known rules of drama.

Finally Sophie, whose irascibility was never far away, exclaimed fretfully:

"I am about to faint, mam'selle! But for that I should nevar leave you. Is it that I have the permission to find the tea?"

"Poor Sophie! Yes, of course."

The woman walked rapidly away to the next room, where she stood be-

hind a broad-shouldered *custodia*, and watched to see if any one of her several theories about mam'selle and the lieutenant was correct.

But instead of St. John, another man promptly joined mam'selle as soon as she was left alone, and so great was Sophie's disgust and disappointment that she went off to find solace in the café.

The American who claimed the acquaintance of Candace had been introduced at the consulate a few weeks before. He was of good family, but for many years expatriated, dissipated, degenerate. What remained of good in the man lay in the hand that held his brush. For he was the painter of indubitably clever pictures of Venetian life.

Two minutes after Sophie left he was beside Candace, large, shabby, slouchy; talking as if the world had gone deaf; wiping his moist brow, neck, and hands incessantly with a handkerchief that had known cleaner moments. The girl shrank from him, and looked about rather helplessly. His breath showed that he had been indulging in recent libations.

"Three pictures out of four should be cut in half," announced the artist aggressively. "I'll show you what I mean—look!" Suddenly, to the vast astonishment of the Italians loitering near, he whisked about the long tails of his shiny, threadbare frock coat, and, going close to one of the landscapes hanging on the line, he covered two-thirds of the canvas with the temporized black curtain. There was a slight rustle among the statuesque well-bred bystanders, and Candace blushed to the tips of her ears.

"The idea in any picture don't take up much room; all the rest is pure padding, repetition, to bleed money out of the tyro. Now, that thing of Henner's is a good example of the reverse treatment. Not an inch too much. First-class three-quarter nude, marvelous handling of the female spinal muscles—very well, what's the use of painting two hundred of 'em sitting around that cool green pool in the moonlight? One

figure shows all that this man knows about a woman's—"

"Good afternoon, Miss Hale," broke in a low voice beside her. She turned and raised a very relieved face to Lieutenant St. John, while a very eager hand met his own. Although firmly resolved not to join her that afternoon, circumstances had combined to force him to go to her rescue. His mood made absence safer.

It did not take an instant to claim an engagement to listen to the band with Miss Hale, and carry her away from the scene of her embarrassment. The interest of the loitering Italians reached fever-heat during this brief scene. Was the second man the husband—grave, punctilious, a little pale from jealousy? The artist was only too well known in Venice, and easily filled the rôle of villain necessary to complete the scene. Had he not joined the pretty signora the very instant the duenna had so indiscreetly left her? It was altogether fascinating, whatever it meant—so much more so than the pictures; and they watched the heroine disappear with a sigh.

As Miss Hale and St. John passed rapidly through the Russian room on their way to the garden, Candace cried out:

"Oh, please, just a moment! I've been waiting all the afternoon to see No. 317. Such a crowd always about it, and now's our chance. Have you seen it? It's the vogue of the exhibition."

"No, I couldn't get anywhere near it, either," said he, smiling at her enthusiasm, glad in his heart that fate had broken for him his vow not to join her. Her beautiful fresh faith in everything, including himself, her almost childlike interest and enthusiasm were fast becoming the source of his daily inspiration, and a sense of self-protection had of late kept him away from her, alternating with reckless moods. Why shouldn't he, too, have his half-hour of joy?—it hurt no one but himself.

No. 317 was by a young Russian artist who was also a supreme drama-

tist with his brush. In a canvas two feet long by eighteen inches broad was the life tragedy of three people.

As the two young Americans stood before it, both of them became deeply affected. Candace's face was full of an intense but rather bewildered interest; in St. John's the ruddy color slowly faded away; and he stood rigid with his hands clenched, and, as he looked, the whole of life became a mere handful of ashes.

The scene before them was an open bit of rough brown ground in the midst of a forest. It was early spring, for the leaves had not yet come, and yet something whispered that they were on the way.

The light was hard, white, wonderfully crystalline, as if it had just rained. Two pools of water were on the edge of the bare forest.

In the foreground lay a man on his back in his shirt-sleeves. It was the shirt of a gentleman. He was shot through the heart, and had staggered, stumbled, and fallen backward. The gray pinch of the face was that of death. His pistol lay at his feet. In the center of the picture was the main figure. A young, very handsome man, also in his shirt-sleeves, his lithe figure full to the front, the right hand still holding the pistol. His left arm was thrown out toward the edge of the forest, the fingers spread out, as if in horrified protest. His face was turned in the same direction, the mouth open in unspeakable anguish. He had fired the shot, evidently heard a piercing shriek, and turned, to see a woman—disheveled, splashed with mud, white as the corpse himself—but young and beautiful—rushing, stumbling through the wood, blind and mad with haste and terror. The scream that seemed to be coming from her gray lips showed that she knew she was too late. A serving man knelt behind the central figure, and his bowed tow head and shrinking shoulders spoke of overwhelming shame. Of what? Of whom? That was the motive of the picture, the mystery that had been the talk of Europe for the past two months.

Candace drew in her breath sharply. Vibrations from that silent tragedy reached out and clutched at her heart-strings as they had done with hundreds of others.

"Do you understand it? The story, I mean?" she murmured, not turning her fascinated eyes.

"Can't say that I do," he replied slowly, after moistening his lips.

"Does life really contain things as hideous as this? Tell me, which of the men does the woman belong to? Whose servant is the kneeling man? Why does he look like that? It's not grief; it's humiliation. She, the woman, is going straight toward the dead man; she doesn't even see the other! And yet the man in the center has the air of having the right to bid her go back. Do you see that, Mr. St. John? He has the right!"

"The high light on that fellow's shirt—isn't it wonderful?" went on the man beside her, hardly aware of what he was saying. "The thing that strikes me is the way that man's white shirt——"

"Which one?" queried Candace.

"Why the one who—the one in the middle of the picture. And the way the light filters through, way back there in the woods."

"Oh, but I can't think of anything yet but the story! It is so terrible, so cruel! I'll come again to try and look at it as a painting. What I want to know now is—do you think she's the wife of the man who has been shot?"

St. John did not answer, and the girl looked up, to find that his eyes were closed, and his face gray, as if cut out of stone.

"You are ill! And I've kept you standing here! Come, take my arm, and we'll go out to the air at once. Let me call one of the attendants!" But he protested that it was only vertigo, and that he needed no help.

With a curious little ghost of a laugh he said:

"You remember I wanted to go out into the garden some time ago. You remember that?"

They walked slowly out to the portico, where she made him sit down, and

procured for him a little glass of brandy. He tried to laugh at her, but she made him drink it.

"I want nothing, Miss Hale, but a little fresh air. A sailor gets so used to the pure ozone, that he's sensitive to closeness in a room. You can understand that, can't you?" he persisted, watching her face with pathetic eyes.

Presently they walked through the garden to the esplanade, and there settled down together on a bench under a branching sycamore.

"Will you stay here with me for a little while? You will not go away—promise me!" he begged, as a sick man might. She promised to remain until he had fully recovered, and then together they looked out upon the peaceful Lagoon, where the water was turning from silver to gold as the sunset hour approached. They were both silent for a little.

"The world of that picture is not true, it's made up! This is the reality!" She threw out her hand toward the exquisite peace of Venice on a quiet May afternoon.

The color came slowly into his face, and he sat sideways and put an arm along the bench behind her. It comforted him somehow to do even that. She talked on, and he watched her and listened to the sweet voice. Every now and then he forced his eyes away from her and looked out over the water to the west, where great blue-black clouds were boiling up, bent on blotting out the golden sunset. And what he saw there was the key to the mystery of No. 317.

"Hadn't we better go?" murmured Candace, who had in turn been watching his face for some time.

"Ah, don't!" he cried violently. "It will never come again, this hour, never!" He put out his hand with sudden passion and seized hers. Whatever in his life was deserving of punishment received it then when he would have spoken, and could not.

Releasing her hand, he laughed and exclaimed:

"If I were a woman I'd call myself hysterical this afternoon, Miss Hale!

No, it's not the brandy—that absurd thimbleful! Good heavens, child, if you only knew—"

"What?" Her smiling face was an open book before his eyes. And old Ciro watching from his gondola chuckled to himself—no need of hearing words to understand those two!

"How much brandy it takes to effect an old sinner like me," was what St. John said, looking down into her happy eyes.

Then came Sophie, mincing along, throwing sharp glances right and left down the vista of each diverging path. She spied the two at last, and stood still, smiling. Closing one of her twinkling eyes, she said aloud: "*V'la!*"

And presently Candace waved her handkerchief to Ciro, and he came to the esplanade, and they all got into his gondola and went westward toward the golden blaze. The black clouds hung low waiting to engulf the sun, the water was like glass. Even the gulls floated idly with the tide. Ciro's gondola alone seemed to move on the face of the waters.

Upon the cushions sat the two silent young people; he presently to be put off at Piazza Garibaldi, whence he could easily reach his ship.

The discreet Sophie sat facing the old gondolier, and once her shrewd little French eyes met his big, passionate Italian ones, and they exchanged a very sophisticated smile over the heads of the quiet couple, and then old Ciro began humming to himself:

*"Maridite, maridite, donsele,
Maridita finch' la foglia è verde—"*

"It's as if the sky and water were one and the same," almost whispered the girl.

"And everything animate and inanimate," said he.

"The future and the past—"

"Evil and good," went on the litany.

"Oh, no; no crucible will ever contain those two, no dissolvent ever melt them into one!"

"Perhaps not," he said sadly.

And then the sun dropped behind the

black curtain in the low west, and light was stricken from the world.

VII.

Old Ciro's shining *ferro* passed between the four ancient lions at the entrance to the Arsenal, and had gone on through a series of small canals which he himself, old as he was, had never before been permitted to navigate. But to-day the American ladies who employed him were accompanied by a very great official in brilliant uniform, and so every sentry, after a brief word, let his gondola pass. And then, too, perhaps his new red cap was not without its effect. For thirty-six hours Ciro had been weighing the joy of wearing it to the *festa* at the Arsenal, against one of his old wife's voluble rages. It was only late the night before that he decided in favor of the new, red-tasseled cap, and sallied forth to the Merceria, before going home, and bought it. Old Berta could go to the devil with her evil tongue! He was still master of his own house, he'd let her understand! If his hand shook a bit, what of that? He always had smoked more than was good for him.

But that morning he forgot Berta and her fury, forgot the one dark, ill-smelling room in a cellar, in the unknown neighborhood behind Salute that he called home, forgot that the children were beginning to call him old Ciro; for the sun shone, and there was a cool breeze, and the great American signora had made him many compliments on his grand new cap, and the signorina, had she not looked full at him and smiled? Her generally rather sad face that morning looked sweet and shy, just like the Holy Virgin's in the Frari Bellini, where she is almost gay, no longer the Mother of the Seven Sorrows.

Ciro, waiting alone in the little sleepy canal far from the spectacle in the dock-yard, enlarged at each telling upon the wonders of the things he saw and heard that day.

And yet within the stadium the thousand spectators saw little more than one another, until the bishop and priests

came and stood on the platform by the impatient prow of the great ship to be launched. They offered a prayer, anointed a bit of the keel with sacred ointment, and then the doves were released and fluttered away to propitiate the winds of heaven. Then the priests and attendants upon the platform scuttled away to safety, the hammers rang, and with glacierlike slowness the enormous bulk imperceptibly began its descent to the waiting level of the sea. The movement at last became perceptible, and a deep murmur came from the people. There was a brief delay, and a thousand human sighs sounded like a sudden wind; then off again, quicker and quicker; then, with a tremendous splash, the miracle of a ship's launching was accomplished; and even placid Venice went mad with excitement.

When it was over Aunt Frank and Candace found themselves holding each other's hands, with tears in their eyes. To relieve her embarrassment, Mrs. Adair promptly belittled the whole affair, and compared it with the same ceremony in the days of the doges.

"You're not listening to one word I'm saying! I like people to look at me when I talk, not— Ah, good morning, gentlemen!" The American officers were still quite out of hearing, but not out of sight of her bow and smile, and quite a number of them soon gathered about Mrs. Adair and her niece. There were the paymaster and the doctor, and Eeling, St. John, and Tipping. The last seized Candace's hand and cried, to her great dismay:

"Sweetheart, do you perchance feel any more like being Mrs. Tipping today than you did yesterday at fourteen? Have you thought it over carefully? To be sure, we'll not have meat very often, dear, but vegetables and cereals are known to be lots healthier."

The other men laughed tolerantly, long used to Tipping's oddities; all but St. John, who apparently did not find the young man funny, and who stood a little apart, scowling. There was something very old-fashioned in the girl's

embarrassment, and the men enjoyed watching it.

Tipping's manner was serious, intense, and he still clung to her hand. The girl's breath came quickly, she laughed nervously and then looked about with entreating eyes; finally, seeing the thunder-cloud in St. John's face, the tears came into her eyes, and an instant later St. John spoke sharply:

"I think that joke has gone about far enough, Mr. Tipping." It was the voice of authority, and Mrs. Adair had the tact to at once leave the stadium, and lead the way back toward the entrance.

"Joke! He said joke!" whispered Tipping to Mrs. Adair, and she pretended a vast sympathy with his wounded sensibilities, and promised him his favorite dish for the *déjeuner*, whereupon he promised to live the day out for her sake.

"Some woman will take you seriously some day, Tipping," warned the paymaster, laughing softly, after St. John had raised his chapeau and walked rapidly away.

"Well, it's bound to be a serious matter, isn't it?"

And no one disputed it.

"What do you suppose got into St. John to catch up poor little Tipping like that, and then stalk off in a rage?" Doctor Pressley asked Candace as they reached the canal, where Ciro awaited them, but her aunt overheard and answered for her:

"Food, children, is what he and all of us need! Come, Mr. Tipping, come, doctor, come, Candace—when in doubt—eat!"

"Come as the waves come, when
Navies are stranded!"

sang Tipping gaily, sinking down on the cushions in the gondola beside Candace.

"I wish I had room for you all, but Ciro limits me to four," exclaimed Mrs. Adair, "but get to the hotel as soon as you can, please, for I am ravenous."

"Not in these togs!" cried the other two men at a breath. "Those youngsters don't mind it, but we couldn't, you

know, really. Thanks, very much." And so they parted.

"Everybody in Venice to-day is in uniform; I don't believe our appearance will stop traffic, doctor, do you?" remarked Tipping, with complacence.

Candace was in one of her quiet moods. When their gondola shot out once more into the Lagoon, her eyes stared at the Island of St. George, and while the others talked she was wondering at the fabric of interlaced emotions of which the thing we call life is made. Once she had believed life to be woven of the sterner threads of men's thoughts—but now she knew better. It was made of many strands, but it was the heart-thread which wrought the pattern.

Two days later Mrs. Adair was lying on the lounge in her room, wearing a loose, white wrapper. Sophie was standing behind her at the head of the lounge, leaning over her mistress, busily massaging certain telltale wrinkles out of Mrs. Adair's throat.

"If it would only turn hot, Sophie, I'd move on to Meran; but I am so comfortable!"

"Yes, madame. It is almost like sleeping, is it not, madame?"

"I shouldn't dare stay very long, Sophie?"

"No, madame?"

"No, for I'd turn into a great jelly-fish, no bones, no muscles. And morally and mentally, too. Don't you feel it, Sophie? Don't you feel as if Monsieur Moses, after all, was just a trifle *exigeant?*"

Sophie felt obliged to giggle discreetly.

"Madame has ever one *bel esprit!*"

After a long silence the maid added slowly:

"And, mam'selle, she appears also to be—comfortable."

"Yes, doesn't she, Sophie?" cried Mrs. Adair delightedly. "Such a change for the dear child after the priggish little town she was born in, with its I-discovered-the-arts-and-sciences-air. Fancy the joy of glorious old Venice, where art was old and full

of quirks and quarrelings long before we were even found!"

"Yes, madame," said Sophie, who had not understood one word. "Oh, but it is natural that mam'selle should find herself very contented. The handsome *messieurs* coming and going, *l'excitation, le—*"

"Like brothers, Sophie!" interrupted her mistress quickly. "You do not understand the Americans; with us it is quite possible, you know." Sophie was applying her knuckles rather vigorously to Mrs. Adair's larynx, as she inquired softly:

"Brothers, madame?"

"Yes, Sophie, brothers!" repeated Mrs. Adair loftily, ending, however, with a comical gurgle that spoiled the impressiveness of her words, and probably encouraged the maid to continue:

"But it is marvelous, madame!"

"What's marvelous?" asked Mrs. Adair sharply.

"The difference, madame, and yet the resemblance."

"Don't talk that way, Sophie, I hate enigmas!" There was no doubt of a growing asperity in her tone, and the maid's trained fingers lingered soothingly behind her mistress' ears.

"I meant only this, madame, that in France we should say that two of the gentlemen are very happy that mam'selle is not their sister." Sophie's soft fingers caressed both of the mastoid muscles.

"Two? Let go of my ears, Sophie! I can't hear a thing you are gabbling about!"

Sophie drew back with a slight flush, and the little touch of resentment furnished the impetus to press on:

"But yes, madame; for example, we in France should say that monsieur the doctor was glad he was not the brother of mam'selle."

"Oh, the doctor! He is made of very safe material. Some day he will make a marriage of *convenience*, Sophie, but never one of sentiment."

"Very well, madame; but the other monsieur?"

"That dear little Monsieur Tipping!" laughed Aunt Frank. "Poor old

Sophie! She longs so for a romance in Venice that she sees visions and dreams dreams."

"It was not of Monsieur Tipping I was thinking, madame, but of the other monsieur with the eyes—ah, so unhappy! In France we should of him perhaps think so and so."

Mrs. Adair sat up abruptly.

"Sophie, come round where I can see you. Now, then, what do you mean? Who's the unhappy-eyed one? Come, speak!"

"But monsieur, the Lieutenant San Jean."

"Never noticed anything especially woful about his eyes! A very self-contained person all round. Well, what's he been doing with them?"

"Looking at mam'selle, so charming, so innocent, so *spirituelle*, madame."

"And mam'selle, Sophie?" Mrs. Adair's tone was crisp, sharp, very nasal.

"It is true that I do not understand the Americans, madame; but if mam'selle were of my own people, I should say—pardon, but I should say—that she looked back into the unhappy eyes, and desired—pardon, madame—to make them look 'happy again."

"Well, mam'selle is American, Sophie!"

"But yes, madame."

Then Mrs. Adair laughed and called Sophie an old chatterbox, and, rising from the lounge, she walked over to the open window looking out on the Grand Canal. After standing there for a moment in silence, she turned and exclaimed with sudden irascibility:

"Sophie, you are absolutely ridiculous; and every day you grow more so."

"Yes, madame."

"And now please get my black net costume. And, Sophie, bring both the black hats, the black and white, and the one with pink roses *par derrière*. Which do you think would be better for me on rather a dull day like this, in one of these palazzos, dark as a potato-cellar?"

Sophie hustled about, forgetting all but the grave matter deferred to her

taste, which was to her both creed and litany.

The instant the maid left the room, Mrs. Adair flew to her desk and wrote a hurried note to Lieutenant St. John asking him to dine informally with them that night. She hoped he would not disappoint them, as they would be leaving Venice within a day or two. Mrs. Adair rang her bell and despatched the note by a messenger, several minutes before Sophie returned.

Candace was out in Ciro's gondola with Doctor Pressley, on a pilgrimage to the House of Othello, near the Carmini. Mrs. Adair had the afternoon to herself, and she was completely aroused from the inertia induced by that perfect Venetian spring. She felt once more mistress of her energetic self, and of every one else within the reach of her several senses. Her eyes were the things to be used that night; other faculties would follow later, dependent upon their report. She had been sunk in slothful luxury of living, more than half-asleep, but the waking hour had come at last.

She did not wish Doctor Pressley to remain to dinner that night, so she wrote a line to Candace, to be handed to her by Sophie the instant the two indefatigable sightseers returned. In the note she simply said that there were to be other guests.

Dressed at last in filmy black, and with a perfection of detail always characteristic of her, Mrs. Adair took a gondola in front of the hotel, and in her maid's hearing she gave the address of a palazzo noted for its Gothic façade and Monday afternoon teas, which continued as late as June, if the temperature permitted.

Then, as soon as the somber craft shot out of hearing, Mrs. Adair told the gondolier to go directly to the Piazza San Marco.

Ten minutes later she was at her banker's, where she wrote and sent two telegrams, one to the proprietor of the hotel at Meran, the other to her Paris banker, giving the new address to which to send mail.

Then she went on to her tea, but

somehow the glamour had gone out of things Venetian; lotus-eating was no longer admirable; the crooked lines everywhere teased her eyes, the sharp cries of the gondoliers her ears. Venice is either one of two things—an exquisitely mellowed illuminated page torn from the book of the golden past, or a rather dirty malodorous bit of decaying flotsam driven ashore by the wind and tide. And the determinate is one's own mood.

Sophie's vanity would have become very rampant, indeed, had she even dreamed of the effect of her words that afternoon.

"She's a sentimental old fool! Her imagination is all she had. It's her romance, her drama, her opera—the reincarnation of her own long-dead love-affairs!" muttered Mrs. Adair to herself, to fortify herself against the chilling sense of impending trouble, which more and more possessed her as the afternoon waned.

That evening, as Candace was dressing for dinner, the pretty housemaid came with a message from Mrs. Adair asking her to come to her private sala as soon as she was ready, as she wished to see her before their guest arrived. Sophie had been sent out, rather to her indignant surprise, to find some pink poppies for the table decoration. Poppies for the evening! When all the world knows that they die at sunset! But it was a drollery of madame's.

Candace hurried on a white crêpe gown that emphasized her height and slenderness. It was cut out a little at the throat, about which she wore a single string of pearls that her aunt had given her in Vienna. She pinned upon the corsage a large bunch of white pansies with golden centers. Tipping had brought them to her that morning. Her dark eyebrows and the pile of shining black hair stood out against the unrelieved whiteness of her gown, and her aunt watched her critically as she entered the salon a few minutes later. The older woman looked the very epitome of self-possessed suavity, and yet the hands were cold which held her black lace fan, and there was a nervous

constriction about the jaw that made it difficult for her to speak naturally.

"Who's coming to-night, Aunt Frank? You have not yet told me," asked Candace.

"Mr. St. John, dear. He wrote that at first he feared he couldn't, because the first lieutenant has gone to Rome. But the captain has a headache, and offered to stay on board. Nice, isn't it?"

"For the captain?" laughed Candace.
"Nonsense! for him, for us."

Sophie certainly was a romance-weaver of the first order! Miss Hale neither hesitated nor blushed, looked neither glad nor sorry. Aunt Frank determined to put her next card on the table.

"Candace, we leave Venice day after to-morrow. I decided to-day, while you were out, and have telegraphed to Meran. We'll go part of the way by diligence. I've arranged to take the *banquette*, as you like it so much. It's quite time we moved on, the paper predicts a warm wave. I want to be off before it arrives."

Candace stood behind a great gilt Empire armchair, leaning against the back, and even her eyelids did not move as she listened. She certainly had, to a striking degree, the gift of repose. Before she replied, one of her long, slim white hands slowly crept down over the wonderful old piece of blue Genoese velvet covering the chair.

"Does—do our friends know we are going?" was all she said.

"I've told only Mr. St. John, so far, I'll have to send cards; there'll be no time for calls."

"Then Mr. St. John knows? He's coming to say good-by, I suppose," the girl said dreamily, her hand moving slowly over the irregularities of the ornate gilt wood carving. Her eyes wandered from the lamp to her aunt's face, and something she saw there made her add quickly:

"I'd like to say good-by to Mr. Tipping."

"And the doctor?" asked Mrs. Adair.

"He—we said good-by to-day, Aunt

Frank," said the girl quietly, her eyes drooping.

"Good gracious, it is time we were off!"

"They've all been very kind to us, haven't they, Aunt Frank?"

"Very, my dear. Just like a lot of nice big brothers, haven't they, Candace?"

"A lot of nice big brothers," repeated the girl slowly. And then Lieutenant St. John was announced, and, as Mrs. Adair arose to receive him, the slim white form by the chair swayed a little, then gripped the chair, and once more stood erect and still, letting the man advance all the way to receive her greeting.

Although his face was rather pale, he seemed very gay and talkative. Mrs. Adair, with the new vision vouchsafed her, was reminded as she watched him of a nervous horse gathering himself together for some great effort, forcing his pace for the few brief preliminary yards allowed him. Perhaps Sophie's extravaganza had at least that much of truth in it—that he was interested. As to Candace, Mrs. Adair felt, as she had from the first, quite at ease. If she had not been, she never would have dared to throw the two thus together on the verge of a separation, and then she did not intend to leave them alone for one instant, be very sure of that! The desire to watch them from Sophie's point of view had been too strong to be resisted.

At any rate, there were all sorts of disturbing possibilities in the air, and Mrs. Adair was thankful her departure was at hand.

She had no objection to St. John personally; in fact, she liked him better than any of the others, but, as a possible suitor for Candace, he, with the others, was entirely out of the question. She had thought that was fully understood from the first. That Doctor Pressley and he were interested in her niece did not distress her in the least; in fact, she rather liked the idea, as long as she was sure of Candace.

Men she had consistently refused to take seriously all of her life. It's only

when they are commanded by the church, watched by an expedient law, backed by habit, that constancy develops itself in them!

So thought Aunt Frank complacently, as a few minutes later she settled herself comfortably at her own table in the dining-room, and signed to St. John to seat himself on her right, opposite Candace.

The man was at his best that night, and Aunt Frank had a Roland ever ready for his Oliver, so the dinner passed off very merrily, after all.

Candace never took much part in one of these American anecdotal tilts, but she filled the rôle of sympathetic auditor as well as usual. Once she felt a little chilly, and word was sent Sophie to bring her a shawl; which, when it came, St. John started to place about the girl's shoulders; but she took it from him, and insisted on putting it on herself, in such a tone that he dared not disobey her. To have granted him that privilege would have made plain to him that she was shivering, trembling from head to foot, so that she raised her fork to her mouth only by the greatest effort of her will. She had always kept her conditions and her moods to herself, so it was never a difficult matter with her.

Toward the end of the dinner the conversation became more personal, and once St. John accused the two women of the basest perfidy.

"Slipping away in the night, after stealing all of our hearts, our peace, our sleep, even our digestion! Pressley and Tipping are already objects of pity painful to contemplate, but when they hear that you are going! Well, I'll speak to the first lieutenant about keeping the life-boats ready to lower until they calm down a bit. I shouldn't think you'd ever again know what peace of mind is, either of you!"

"Aunt Frank says the 'still, small voice' has got to buy a megaphone these days to gain any attention," replied Candace at random, looking briefly into his audacious eyes.

"Did I say that?" asked Aunt Frank. "I don't remember it, at all. Well, anyway, we agreed a little while ago that

you were all just her big brothers, didn't we, Candace? And we don't want any other ideas put into our heads. As for you, you're sailors, and protected through many inoculations—we repudiate your aspersions!"

As the dinner went on Aunt Frank became more and more reassured. She thought with some pride that once suggest even the possibility of trouble to her, she immediately laid a strong hand on the situation, and controlled it.

The great dining-saloon was nearly empty. It was too late for many visitors in Venice. The long table d'hôte was no longer set, only half a dozen smaller tables near the front windows were partly filled with guests. The rest of the great room was in shadow. Mrs. Adair's table was in one of the open French windows, looking out on the Canalazzo. At about nine o'clock the brilliantly lighted boats of the *cantatori* began slowly drifting toward the hotel. In the distance, a wonderfully clear, high tenor was singing with exaggerated abandon and passion "*A che la morte*," as only an Italian can sing it, and fill it once more with the perennial youth of love and longing.

At that moment Candace's fingers closed so tightly about the slender stem of her sauterne glass, with which she had been idly playing, that it snapped in two, and the golden wine spilt all over her hand and upon the cloth.

St. John was so anxious lest she had cut herself, and Aunt Frank so chagrined at the girl's infelicity that they both forgot to ask the reason for it.

While the waiter removed the traces of the small accident, the voice singing in the night drifted out of hearing, and a gay Vilota had taken its place.

"The evening's concert is in full swing; how would you like to go out in a gondola for a half-hour or so, Mrs. Adair? By drifting about we can choose our own program; stationary, we are compelled to listen to whatever comes our way." It was St. John's suggestion, and he looked at Candace as he made it.

"Oh, no! I can't go, I can't go!" she protested vigorously, and then, as the

other two turned to her in amazement, she added more quietly: "One night we got into a jam of gondolas, Sophie and I; and a woman sang horribly, and we could not get away. Please don't make me go again—go without me, if you wish, of course, Aunt Frank."

"What nonsense! None of us will go. Come, let's go up to our rooms for coffee and your cigarette, Mr. St. John. Privately, I'd like hugely to join you, but Candace objects. And if you could see Miss Prudence Endicott, duenna, you'd know why!"

Mrs. Adair arose with a laugh, and led the way out of the dining-room.

In their own salon they all gathered in one of the windows overhanging the canal, and leaned against the "kneeling" railing of iron. From time to time St. John threw down to the singers bits of copper or silver wrapped in cigarette-papers. The elaborateness with which these missives were acknowledged was in exact proportion to the amount of the gift, the head man of the singing guilds inspecting each with delightful naïveté.

Every singing guild in Venice knew by that time that the windows *piano secundo* were those of the imperially rich Americans, and so one *ferro* after another was insinuated into the throng below, and new voices were raised to gain a few drops of that silver shower.

An evening spent in suchwise precludes any necessity for conversation, and Mrs. Adair seemed to take an unusually tolerant interest in the evening's concert.

St. John murmured something about taking his leave, but the intention evidently died in the expression of it.

They had withdrawn from the balcony, as Candace had again showed signs of feeling cold, although the night air was full of summer's warmth and languor. She sat in the shadow of the curtain, her hands clasped in her lap. The effect of her aunt's several conversational restrictions had been to silence the girl while in her presence, and that night she seemed no more self-contained than usual.

Aunt Frank fanned herself peacefully on the other side of the window. St.

John sat between them, the lights from the canal playing an incessant change upon his face.

The evening would undoubtedly have come to a very prosaic ending if Sophie had not chosen to give a flip to the wheel of fortune; partly because she had an unfed dramatic instinct, and partly because she thought mam'selle very helpless and madame very unsympathetic in affairs of the heart. At half-past nine Sophie had entered the *sala* to turn up the lamps, and had seen the three figures in the window. At quarter to ten, sitting in madame's bedroom, the temptation to interfere and play the part of *le bon Dieu* became irresistible.

Bursting into the *sala* with a carefully calculated feint of haste and fright, she crossed the room swiftly, and, stooping to Mrs. Adair's ear, she whispered:

"Pardon, madame, but, for the love of Heaven, tell me, are you wearing tonight your lorgnon chain of gold with the baroque pearls?"

"No, Sophie. I left it—where did I leave it? Oh, yes, on the dressing-table. Why?"

"*Mon Dieu!* Madame, give me instantly my dismissal! I go immediately! The chain has disappeared!"

Mrs. Adair arose at once. It was a gift from her husband, one of the few baubles of the many she owned to which she was attached—as Sophie very well knew. Aunt Frank turned to the others, and spoke of her loss with some excitement.

"It's the *facchino*! I'm absolutely sure! I never could bear the back of his neck! I don't care one rap what people's faces look like; for character, give me the back of their necks. The thing is to act at once in such cases."

"Let me go to the office and give the alarm," cried St. John, rising.

"How like my husband!" came in wearied tones from Mrs. Adair.

"Can I help, Aunt Frank?" asked Candace.

"You! He'd steal the rings off your fingers while you talked to him. No, I don't want any one but Sophie. If it's

to be found, she and I'll track it down, won't we, Sophie?"

"Yes, madame," replied that demure person with some assurance.

Looking back at the door, Sophie's little eyes danced as she saw the girl and the man left alone together by the window. The good God had given them youth, the night, and love; and she, Sophie, now gave them the beautiful chance! The woman closed the door gently after her mistress.

"I do not feel as if I had seen you at all to-night!" burst out St. John irritably, the instant they were alone. She did not reply.

"And so this is the end of it—forever the end of it! Oh, I know, people say 'until we meet,' and all that—but it never comes again exactly—never! It was just a little Venetian mask for a night; the sun is up, and it is over!"

"A mask? Why a mask?" she asked softly.

"Doesn't every one go masked—you and I with the others?" he replied quickly, determined to keep a tight rein on his tongue that night, aware that every moment of the evening had been pushing him toward a confession that were better left unsaid.

Suddenly the momentary silence out on the canal was broken by the voice of the young tenor of the earlier evening. It came nearer and nearer drifting along the canal.

As Candace listened, she knew that all the restraint of that evening would go for naught, that she was being slowly drawn toward a precipice, moving not of her own volition, but as a mere drop in the creeping, irresistible flood about her. Music had all her life aroused her emotions, dragged her out of her own secretive conventional self, let down the bars of her soul.

She sat leaning forward in her chair staring out at the tiny threads of colored light weaving their pretty pattern across the quiet water. If the man singing out there in the night would but go away!

Silence is surely the mother of passion, if sound be the sire; and if Candace had been a woman of many arts,

she could not have succeeded in more thoroughly arousing the man beside her. Her very immobility, remembering what she could be, impelled him to speech; and speech, once started, has a gathering momentum of its own, which sometimes ends in unforeseen disaster.

"Before two people separate at a masquerade, Miss Hale, don't they raise their masks for a fleeting glance? And then—pouf! Out go the lights! The ball is over!" St. John laughed excitedly, and dragged his chair nearer to her.

"If you'll lift yours, I'll lift mine—come, will you?"

That voice, oh, that voice singing out there in the sweet, starlit night! If it would only cease tugging at her heartstrings!

"Sleep, my heart's good, sleep on!
Sleep, and take thy repose!"

it was now singing.

"I—I wear no mask," the girl whispered.

"Oh, yes, you do! Do I know what you are really thinking at this moment? Do I know the Candace Hale that you know? Ah, I thought so. No more am I the man you think I am. Come, off with your mask!"

"I raised mine for you long ago, the day we went to Murano," she said.

"Dear little girl—dear little girl!" he repeated softly. "Is her worst offense keeping tryst with an echo?"

He was absolutely sure of her indifference—he had taken good care of that—a few words more or less would do no harm with the parting so near. She was safe—and he? He had sounded long ago the depths of human suffering, he was forever immune!

"Now look, the mask is up! Dear—oh, don't start, I just want to say it once—I have not tried to make you care for me, but if things had been different in my life—my past, I mean—I know that I should have tried. That is all I can say—ever—to you."

"I do not understand," she murmured, staring at him.

"There's always the unexpected behind a mask!" he cried lightly.

And then something happened that tore aside the veil that they were both so carefully holding in place.

The voice on the canal had ceased, and out of the almost absolute silence of a Venetian night stole forth from an adjoining room a thread of sound. A violin crying out of a burdened heart, infinitely pathetic in its yearning, its regret, its profound sadness.

"Oh, I cannot stand any more! I cannot stand it!" cried the girl, springing to her feet and raising her hands to her ears.

The *andante* movement went on pleading for a love denied, a happiness departing; the slow, thrilling notes rising, one above the other, in an endless iteration of entreaty. It was the voice of love speaking to her in the music, and for the first time Candace understood.

St. John had arisen when she did, and, going up to her, he took one of her hands and held it in both of his.

"It's so cold, let me put a little warmth into it—poor little hand! For the first and last time."

She became very quiet. His touch was but a part of the voice of the violin calling to her out there in the darkness! And it seemed to say:

"Under all, through all, above all is the hunger of love! Take—take when it is held out to you! Give—give while there is life within you!"

"Why—the last time?" she whispered, withdrawing her hand. He looked at her sharply. A sudden dread possessed him, and when he spoke his voice was harsh:

"Tell me, quick, I have not hurt you? I'm just the good friend to you that I've tried to be? You have not been—oh, I cannot say it! Speak to me—I have not hurt you, little girl?" She had gone, as he spoke, to the window, and stood leaning there in silence. The music told of the coming separation, and the long years ahead, and in a sort of terror she cried out in desperation, trying to laugh:

"I suppose this is what the world calls a flirtation! It is a new experience to me, and extremely interesting!"

She turned, as if to leave the room, when he stood before her, and the words poured from him in a torrent, beyond even any wish of his to control.

"You simply insult me! I thought my heart was dead till I met you. Twelve years ago—it is a terrible story, do you care to hear it?" He spoke almost roughly, standing before her, white with pain.

"Do you remember that Russian picture?"

"Number 317? Yes."

"It's the story of my life."

"Which—" she panted.

"I am the central figure."

"The other man—the woman?" The girl's slim, white figure strained away from him, seeking the shadows in the window's recess.

The violin climbed a stairway of *arpeggios* higher and higher, until the journey ended in one piercingly sweet, high note that touched the sky and faded slowly into the silence.

"The woman was my wife. The man a friend; mine and hers—long, long ago."

"But—"

"There are no buts, child," St. John said sadly; "it is literally true, that picture."

"You—?"

"Yes, I did just that; only not in Russia, of course. And the proof of her guilt saved me. Saved my body—all the rest of me died."

Somewhat the silence seemed to ask a question.

"She is living, somewhere. I do not know or care where. We have never been separated by the law, although in fact always since that day. She broke one law, I another—we are quits. People go on eating, sleeping, even laughing, as you see for yourself, but after such things they are forever alone to the end—branded! It is the penalty they pay for the slaking of one overwhelming passion; sometimes love, sometimes jealousy." He paused an instant, and then added: "And that's why I have tried to be just a big brother to you, dear!"

The clean blood and strong nerves of

all of her forefathers came to the help of the New England girl in the window; generations of discipline and self-mastery made it possible for her to say slowly:

"Just the big brother—the nice big brother."

"And you're not afraid of me, my dear? I am not horrible to you?"

"I—am—not—afraid," she whispered, between teeth that seemed locked in a deadly chill, praying that he would go, but with no strength to dismiss him.

And then Aunt Frank burst into the room.

"Sophie's found it! There's not the slightest doubt in my mind that that beast of a *facchino* put it under the corner of the rug—the big yellow one, Candace, that looks like a parsley omelet. Just waiting for a chance to carry it off. Possibly he heard we were going away—that's Sophie's idea. Such sharp eyes as that woman has!"

St. John went toward her and held out his hand.

"I've stayed an unconscionable time, Mrs. Adair, but I kept expecting you to return every minute. If I can be of any assistance before you leave, please command me. Good night and good-by."

"Candace!" cried her aunt, her voice sharpened by a growing alarm at her niece's silence and curious behavior, "Mr. St. John is going—are you too sleepy even to say good-by to him?"

"Good-by," came from the girl in a moan, and she fell face forward to the floor, unconscious.

The agony of self-reproach of the man and woman who lifted up the slight figure was almost evenly balanced. In that moment St. John found new depths of remorse hitherto unsounded. Was there no such thing as an idle step detached from direction and intention? Apparently not, as a few minutes after the inanimate form had been carried out of the room, Mrs. Adair returned and said to him rather imperiously:

"May I ask you to remain until I have seen the doctor, Mr. St. John? My niece is coming to, but Sophie says it looks like a congestive chill. I should

like to have one word with you, if you will be so kind."

All night long Aunt Frank sat on the floor beside the girl's bed, in disheveled anguish and savage self-reproach. Once or twice she kissed in tearful humility the now limp hand hanging over the edge of the bed. Candace did not move, the chill was over, and she was lying exhausted and speechless, with wide-open eyes, staring at the shadows cast by the night-light.

Toward morning Mrs. Adair went to rest, and Sophie took her place. For the moment, the forces of living in the girl were almost in suspension before reentering the waiting world of sensation and volition.

"Mam'selle, poor little mam'selle, cannot Sophie help you? Can you not speak, to make known your desire?" the woman begged, as the early daylight came in through the lattice and found Candace's eyes still staring tearlessly. The French woman also bore her own heavy burden of self-reproach.

Finally Sophie saw the lips move, and she sprang up and, stooping down close to the pillow, heard:

"Piece of paper—write."

Kneeling on the floor, Sophie wrote the cable to Uncle Standish—just two words: "Lonely" and "Candace." And then she folded the bit of paper and put it in the bosom of her black dress, until the morning came.

There was a long silence in the room, and then the girl said slowly, bravely, as if she were at last ready to go back into the normal current of living:

"Sophie, Uncle Stand is coming to take me to Switzerland. He promised to come if I—if I got tired of cities. We love the green things, the hills, and the brooks—he and I. Will not that be—very, very nice, Sophie?"

"But yes, dear mam'selle," sobbed Sophie. Candace turned her head and watched the maid for a moment with a sort of wonder in her eyes. Then presently Sophie saw the blessed tears begin to pour down the girl's face, and her unnatural calm break up, and this time the maid was wise, and whispered

a prayer of thankfulness to the good God, who, after all, knows what is best for us.

VIII.

"These confounded old German trout don't know a good thing when they see it!" growled Uncle Standish, eyes on his forty-foot cast straightening out in front of him, his three bright American flies dropping lightly into the time-honored waters of the River Enz, not far from Wildbad.

"Perhaps it's because they do see it, Uncle Stand," suggested Candace, half-apologetically; her tone suggesting the successful angler addressing the unsuccessful. Which idea was borne out by the presence on the grass beside her of half a dozen fine trout, all over the stipulated thirty centimetres in length. She had stopped fishing for very shame of her success, and sat contemplating her wading-stockings of London make, of which she was comically proud. In her lap lay her uncle's bulky book of American flies, which he persisted in using, in face of all tradition.

On a single dull little "Partridge Hackle" Candace had each day almost filled her basket; which only served to harden Uncle Stand's heart the more against the use of local flies. She might keep the fish and welcome, he had his theory!

But high-minded as was this attitude, it somehow did not improve his temper.

Candace sat smilingly watching his sturdy little khaki-clad figure, so expressive of grumpy obstinacy, and her eyes were full of a kind of motherly affection for him, which made them very beautiful. She was stouter, and tanned almost beyond recognition by her two months of outdoor life with Mr. Adair. She had taken off her canvas hat, and was fanning herself vigorously with it, for it was almost eleven o'clock, and even in the Schwarzwald one gets a little overheated after three hours of wading, dressed practically in rubber from head to foot.

As she listened to and watched the rhythm of the fisherman's incessant cast forward and back, she recalled some-

thing she had once read in an ancient book on the angler: "Atte the leest (he) had his holsom walke . . . and if the angler take fysshe, surely, thenne, there is no man merier than he is in his spryte." And so it had proved in Switzerland, where Mr. Adair had condescended to English dry flies, and been of the merriest sort of "spryte." But since they had come to the Black Forest, and settled down very comfortably at the Royal Bad Hotel in the romantic and very picturesque little town of Wildbad, Mr. Adair had seen fit to sacrifice everything material and spiritual to a certain theory concerning American "dressings."

Candace thought, with a twinkle in her eyes, of Aunt Frank's probable comments on the situation, if she had been with them, instead of with Sophie at Biarritz, where she was changing her gowns four times a day and otherwise thoroughly enjoying herself.

"Now, Candace, I want you to watch me for a moment! If there are any more fish in this creek— which I doubt —they're in that riffle over there. I'll put my tail-fly in the middle of that big bubble. It's wonderful what precision one acquires from practise. If you keep patiently at it, you'll be doing it yourself some day, my dear." A moment later Candace pretended that she had not seen how very far short of the aforesaid big bubble his "professor" had dropped. When he looked around at her quickly over his shoulder, he was relieved to find that she was turning over the pages of his gorgeous flies, which somehow did not appeal to German taste.

Presently Uncle Stand heard a growl of thunder, and at once began reeling in. As the girl heard the now familiar click, she looked up in surprise.

"Disgusted, Uncle Stand?"

"Disgusted? Why should I be disgusted?" he answered testily. "I don't come out for the trout alone. That just shows how little, after all, you enter into the true spirit of a sportsman. 'Fish is not all of fishing,'" Uncle Stand went on, his gloomy eyes on her morning's catch.

"The mere fish represents about one-fifth of my pleasure; the rest is the fresh air, the beautiful running water, these sweet-scented woods, and the peace of it all—and you, dear."

He was now beside her, and as he stooped and patted her dark head, she looked up and smiled. He had now talked himself into his habitual sunny mood, and explained that thunder always takes a fish's appetite away, and, as the real essence of the sport lay in the gamble of the cast, when that factor was eliminated, it was a wise man's part to reel in.

As he sat beside her, puffing at his pipe, and disjoining his own rod and hers, a strong sense of well-being crept over Candace. She had not lived close to nature all these weeks for naught, nor in the companionship of a man as wholesome as nature itself.

From the hour of his joining them at Meran, she had clung to him and obeyed him utterly, as a child does. He had dropped everything, and gone to her as quickly as he could after receiving her brief cable from Venice, in return for which he demanded obedience. Candace was to read no books except guide-books, she was to hear no music (of which she had a sort of terror), she neither wrote letters, nor at first received them, until they had passed through Uncle Stand's fat hands, which somehow proved non-conductors of emotion.

With their two rods and a bite of lunch, they had gone forth together day after day. During the non-fishing hours at midday, she had wandered about botanizing a bit from habit, or studying the birds, when relieved of her wading-costume, under which she, too, wore khaki. After lunch she sometimes fell asleep on his steamer-rug, fairly drugged with sunshine, fresh air, and unusual exertion. He, meanwhile, found all the diversion he cared for in his pipe, and the endless, loving fingering of his flies and tackle.

Mrs. Adair had told him briefly, but with a clever woman's reserve, of the story of Venice. He had blown his nose resoundingly, and then lapsed into si-

lence. Finally he had said in rather a husky voice:

"Frank, leave her to me, and you go off and amuse yourself for the rest of the summer. Then we'll all meet in Cherbourg and go home together. I'll try my hand at protecting a young girl's happiness."

This comment was considered so brutally severe that his wife would not speak to him until he had abjectly apologized, and added something offhand about her looking thinner; whereupon she instantly forgot her anger, and asked for particulars.

"Why, Frank, the minute I saw you I noticed the change! You must have lost six or eight pounds," remarked the wily little man.

"Not really?" she cried, already at the mirror critically examining herself with a hand-glass. "Where do you notice it particularly, Stand?" And even then he knew the answer.

"Seems to me it's around the waist." And so peace was restored; and Mrs. Adair consented to take Sophie and go on her way, and Uncle Standish had Candace to himself, bent on bringing back the sparkle to her eyes, the smile to her pale lips.

Candace herself had never spoken of Venice, nor referred to their life there, since they had left. It was her work, with Uncle Stand's help, to forget it. It had been a beautiful dream, from which she had been awakened by a terrible nightmare. They had all told her that that was life. She had not known before. Would it not have been better to have left her "half-asleep," as her aunt called it? If they had known that living was like this, was it kind to awaken her? For she was aware that there were forces now awake in her soul which never again would fall asleep.

Only once, at Pontresina, had the memory of Basil St. John come back to Candace almost overwhelmingly. One evening she was standing by the window in her room, which was at the back of the hotel, and she was looking out at the white mystery of the great Rosegg Glacier, wondering, as she always did, at those tremendous tragic

forces working so silently, so imperceptibly, through the night when all other things slept. The night of freezing, the day of melting and movement; to what end were those slow, relentless laws working?

Then suddenly the girl started, and with a low cry of pain, sank into a chair and covered her face. Three men's voices, singing a jolly *stein* song, were approaching along the post-road in front of the hotel; German students returning, probably, from a belated climb. And cowering there alone, the music brought back to Candace—Venice! Once more the memory of it filled all of her senses, and her soul cried out for the love denied her.

When the voices ceased, she became more quiet, and once more went to the window.

Why had undeserved suffering been allowed to enter her life? Why had it entered once more into his shattered life? If evil was regnant, after all, then it were more intelligible; but if good reigned, how reconcile such dominion with gratuitous suffering? Or was human suffering just another of those relentless mysterious laws, like those governing the great glacier out there under the stars, working slowly toward some great end, out of human ken?

And then Uncle Standish had knocked on her door, and given her a letter from her aunt, with a bit of freshly gathered edelweiss, kissed her on the forehead and bade her good night. Somehow she knew that, after all, it was good that ruled.

The day following the growl of thunder at Wildbad, it rained in such torrents that even Mr. Adair did not venture out. He and Candace spent the hours together in the empty little reading-room, which they happily had to themselves, the few guests having fled at the approach of the storm. Uncle Stand tied some new "leaders" and mended a broken rod tip, while Candace read aloud to him "*The Compleat Angler*," the quaint spelling and wording of which greatly amused her. "*The Milkmaid's Song*" and "*The Mothers'*

Answer" were especial favorites of Mr. Adair's, and several times in their reading the girl pretended that she could not make out the words, just to give him a chance to prompt her, and carry on the verse from memory, which he always did in naive triumph.

When it came to the lines:

"The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward winter reckoning yields
A honey tongue, a heart of gall—"

"That'll do, Candace, I don't care for the rest of it!" broke in Uncle Stand abruptly; "gets sort of maudlin toward the end. I loathe Tupperism; don't you?" The tender-hearted little man talked on at random, bent on undoing his small misadventure. Meanwhile, the girl of course saw through it all, and smiled brightly at him to set his mind at rest concerning her. She was made of far stronger stuff than he knew, but his sheltering affection for her sank into her heart and healed it, and made it once more strong to take up life and go on.

"Oh, the sweet contentment
The countryman doth find!"

read Candace, when the porter appeared at the door and bowed with a click of his heels, mumbling something. Uncle Stand looked up and shouted at the top of his lungs, possessed with the idea of Europe's deafness:

"Sprechen sie louder, kellner!"

"Wish you that I to you the post bring, sir?" repeated the porter in German. Uncle Stand coughed. Candace smiled, mischievously unhelpful.

However, the interrogative inflection came to Mr. Adair's aid, and he said hastily: "*Yah! yah!*" Whereupon the short, blond, military-looking *kellner* advanced and handed the American a batch of home letters and an armful of daily New York papers, which he had long since ceased to read.

"How much even a comparatively small vocabulary adds to one's comfort when traveling, doesn't it, Candace?" boasted Uncle Stand, taking the letters and pointing to the table as the safest repository for the many newspapers.

"What a feast for a rainy day!" cried

Candace, rising and beginning to tear off the brown wrappers. There was no response, and the girl looked quickly across the table at him, to find that he was staring at her over the top of an open letter.

"Umph?" he grunted absent-mindedly; and she knew, as if he had told her, that there was in that letter something concerning her, perhaps concerning St. John! She knew that the dear little uncle was dazed and uncertain what to do in regard to it. She wandered to the window, every nerve tingling, every leaf of her fast-expanding nature once more infolded closely about her instinctive reserve.

"A nice letter from your Aunt Frank," explained Uncle Stand busily, not, however, handing it to his niece as usual. "Listen to this: 'I'm so excited that I can hardly take my pen in hand, as the saying is; the implication being that less excited I naturally would hold it in my toes! Tell Candace that old Ciro, my gondolier, has turned up! He found us through the bank. He swears that Berta, his wife, died a natural death this summer—but, being an Italian, what might seem natural to him might not to us! I've written to the consul to find out. The funny part of it is that old Sophie has got it into her romantic head that he's madly in love with her. You ought to see her! She wears any and all of my things to early mass. I know it, because every rag I have reeks with inexpensive incense.'

"The truth being that Ciro is mad to get to America, and he's such a shrewd old chap, if he has to marry Sophie to do it, why, bless you, he'll marry her! I'm waiting for the consul's letter in reply to my inquiry. In the meanwhile it's all telling on me. No one *ondules* my back hair as Sophie does, and if she must have old Ciro, I'll buy him for her! After I hear about that poor Berta, of course. He offers to be my gondolier for nothing for six months, if I'll only land him in New York! Fancy his red cap on the avenue!"

Uncle Stand laughed, folded up the

letter, and put it into an inside pocket. The girl knew that the real news had been withheld from her by the little man, who was too honest, too ingenuous for his assigned rôle.

He was unusually chatty and resourceful that afternoon and evening, but Candace was very quiet, feeling keenly the advance vibrations of some coming event closely connected with herself.

That night Mr. Adair, in the privacy of his own chamber, took out his wife's letter and reread it. Folded tightly into a small compass was enclosed a telegram from Villefranche, addressed to Mrs. Standish Adair. It read:

Where is your niece, Miss Hale? Kindly wire reply. Signed, B. ST. JOHN.

Aunt Frank's comments were as follows:

"He's played into my hands, and I mean to take the trick and keep it. I shall not give him her address! You say that Candace is once more entirely herself—she'll soon forget (*I* always did!), and if you think that I'm going to sit tamely by and see her enter into one of those long, harrowing, aging, idiotic, soul-understandings with this man with a scar on his history; or, indeed, if I'm to watch her married to any navy man whatsoever, you don't know me, that's all!"

"I don't believe in all this forever-and-ever-amen love between men and women—especially men! Everybody on earth gets over everything—except leprosy! I know the exact man for Candace this minute in New York. He has two cars and a steam-yacht, and would be nice in the family. The campaign will begin as soon as we get back in September. Can you guess who it is?"

The rain had ceased, and about eleven o'clock Mr. Adair went out to take a long walk on the promenade close by the river. Once he stood looking up at the quickly flying clouds, and thought of what his wife said. Surely change, not stability, is the law! Physically, morally, mentally, every atom in us changes constantly, like those hurrying

mists up there. Why not the heart? "I, too, shall be silent," he said, and walked on. Later, as he returned, he stopped under the same pine-tree, and stood puffing a cigarette. Presently he looked up once more, to find the sky clear, the clouds gone, the stars wonderfully brilliant after the rain. The small man stood still with upturned face, in one of those rare moments that come to all, when one of nature's componplaces suddenly becomes a miracle. He said aloud:

"Behind those shifting clouds were the changeless stars—I forgot that! There have been human loves like that—immutable. So I have loved Frank, and shall to the end. Perhaps Candace is like that. Perhaps it is a great love—and may never come again. Who am I, that I should decide it? He shall have her address!"

The following day was one of those exquisite ones that sometimes come after a long, heavy rain; brilliant with sunshine; warm, and drying quickly under foot.

Even at their early breakfast, Mr. Adair began tenderly fingering his gaudy "Toodee Bugs," and "Yellow Sallys," and "Blue Jays," Candace watching him with laughing eyes. Suddenly he closed his book and snapped the broad elastic.

"I tell you what I'll do, Candace! To-day I'll follow your advice, just for luck. I'll take any fly you say. After a rain like that, even Frank could scoop up a fish with her parasol in any civilized community; but in this absurd country, the Lord knows what to expect. I'll abandon my theory, and try one of these modest little flies apparently demanded by Enz trout. Come, name your fly!"

"Silver Sedge!" cried Candace so promptly that Uncle Stand shouted. "Or I'll take that, and you try my 'Partridge Hackle,'" she amended.

Mr. Adair answered almost sternly:

"Never, my child, never let me see you abandoning a fly that has brought you luck! Stick to your 'Partridge,' and I'll try the alliterative gent."

So they sallied forth together, a small

box of dry flies occupying the place of the cherished "theory"; but Uncle Stand's conscience was uneasy, for he knew that he was no longer worthy to be called a sportsman and a patriot.

On their way to a certain pool not far from Dieterswasen, Mr. Adair had been obliged to show his Angel-Fischer-Karte several times, with its "unmentioned permission impowering them to fish with rod" certain waters of the Enz River; said privilege costing twelve marks apiece.

Either the "Silver Sedge," or the recent rain, or the mere humors of the sport, brought a full basket to Uncle Stand that day. Finally, fairly glutted with triumph, he joined Candace, who had long ago stopped fishing, and had seated herself on the steamer-rug to watch her uncle's intense pleasure in his long-delayed success.

"Well, it's been a great day, hasn't it, Candace? I believe they'd rise at a hot cake this morning! I wish I'd brought my American—" he began regretfully, but Candace shook her finger at him. His heart warmed and expanded until it seemed to take in all the world; he would like to have handed out happiness to people as if it were small silver. Impulsively he walked nearer to Candace and said very gently:

"My dear, a telegram has come asking for your address. Shall I reply to it or not?"

There was no answer. The girl sat perfectly still, staring at the river. She had known that something was coming, but she had not expected this—not exactly this! That it was from St. John she knew absolutely. Her uncle's grave tone told that.

"If you are well and contented, Candace, wouldn't it be wiser to—well, not answer the telegram?" he suggested

"I've always had to do the wise things!" murmured the girl sadly. And Uncle Stand looked at her slight, rigid figure, and knew that, after all, happiness cannot be dispensed broadcast; it is rare, like a pearl to be dug out of shells with difficulty.

Then he spoke again briefly, repelled by her silence and reserve:

"I will wire to-night, giving your address, although I am strongly opposed to any idle reopening of a thing hopeless on the face of it. Come, let's go back to lunch, we drive to Baden-Baden this afternoon, you know."

The next afternoon, before dinner, Mr. Adair was seated in the Curhaus listening to the music. He was hatless and dressed for the table d'hôte dinner, as, the band music-hall being part of the large hotel at which they were stopping, was permissible.

A waiter approached him with several telegrams. Mr. Adair received so many from his office in New York, that he ripped the envelopes open without even looking at the form, reading the contents with one quick sweep of his accustomed eyes. Suddenly he flushed like a girl, arose hastily, and left the Curhaus. He went directly to the little reading-room, where he found Candace turning over a German comic weekly.

"Candace, my dear, I've done a horrid thing! This telegram is yours! I didn't look at the address. It came in my daily batch. I beg your pardon, my dear child. You know I wouldn't do such a thing, don't you?"

Candace had turned very white, but sat perfectly still, reading and rereading the words that seemed like live things springing at her, and choking her. The telegram was from Villefranche, and was signed by initials:

I have discovered I have been free for two years. Are you sure you are not afraid?

As Uncle Stand gave her white, stricken face one embarrassed look, he knew beyond all doubt that there had been much hidden from him during all those sunny months.

But why didn't the girl speak? Cry? Laugh? Why did she sit there still and dumb as a statue? It was uncanny, used as he was to his wife's gesticulation, volubility, and highly dramatic scenes! Finally he sat down beside the girl, and laid his soft, warm hand on her thin, cold one, saying, with great gentleness:

"Can I help you, dear? I'm not so

very wise, I know, but I've lived a long, long while."

A sudden flash of intense emotion came into her face as she clung passionately to his hand, and whispered:

"Oh, I want help so! No one ever offered it before—like that, I mean. I've never had any one, never, all my life long! People seem either to laugh, or to scold—sometimes one needs loving kindness. I need it so! I will tell you everything, and then you will tell me what to do. You see, it isn't just my own happiness, it is his, too!" The tears rushed to Mr. Adair's eyes. There certainly was another Candace under the calm, self-contained girl he knew! Then she told her story. As Uncle Stand listened and counseled, the spirit of his wife hovered near with reproachful eyes.

That night the wires carried a message to Villefranche which read:

I am not afraid.

Uncle Stand, already a little jealous of the interloper, had explained that, of course, that message would result in his coming.

"Oh, but I happen to know that he can't leave his ship! You don't understand naval matters, Uncle Stand," she replied, which for some reason he found vastly funny. Renewing his merriment, when, five days later, Candace received another telegram from Toulon:

Have one week's leave. Ship docked. May I come?

The girl's eyes looked as if she had seen a ghost when she handed the paper to Uncle Stand to read. She had much to learn of masculine precipitancy, preferring ells to inches.

"Well, which of the two potential monosyllables are you going to wire back?" teased Mr. Adair, just to bring a smile to her frightened face.

The next day, to calm Candace's growing excitement, they drove to the ruined castle at Zavelstein. Then, later, they ascended via the Fünf Bäume to the picturesque and isolated Wildsee, in whose depths lived certain water-sprites of which many legends are known to the

country people; and to which Candace was never weary of listening.

Upon their return, Uncle Standish found a letter awaiting him from Mrs. Adair:

I've heard from the consul in Venice! Full particulars, doctor's certificate and all. Old Berta died of "*an apoplexy*," after one of her rages. What's *an apoplexy*? Is it different from the plain kind? So Ciro goes with us in September! In fact, I'm writing to warn you and Candace to be ready to move at a day's notice. I may have to change our booking to an earlier date; for if he should once settle down here, I know I'd lose Sophie! He's her last possibility, and a woman defends that as a tigress does her only cub. You ought to know, Standish dear, for you were mine!

The next morning Uncle Stand got up very early and slipped off to the river alone; his heart was full of tenderness for the girl toward whom fate was hurrying with flying feet. He nodded his gray head very wisely, and thought, half-aloud:

"Only a baby's little downy head nestled in her arms will really open the gates of that poor frozen child's emotional nature; and then—she will be charming!"

Candace wandered out alone that morning without her rod, and yet taking one of the paths to the river from habit. She walked away from the little town; on her right the very dark foliage of the extraordinarily fragrant pines, on her left, some sunny meadows full of maize and barley fast nearing their harvesting. There was the choking odor of hops in the air, the sound of bees busy among the wild flowers; tingling in the girl's veins were health, youth, and coming happiness.

Presently she turned in toward the river. She came out on the bank where the stream was narrow and deep; and opposite, jutting beyond the forest's green screen, was a huge rock of granite. Candace stood a moment puzzled. It seemed so familiar, yet she had never been there before. The girl's tall, straight figure was in white flannel, soft hat and all, and she leaned against a beech-tree in an attitude habitual to

her, with her hands folded before her. Suddenly a smile came to her face. She knew why the whole scene was familiar! She was once more a dreaming maiden wandering in the New Hampshire woods, flirting with the echo! It was in just such a place that the water-sprite answered her! Perhaps one had floated down from the Wildsee where there were so many! She glanced about and listened. She was alone, so just for fun, just for old time's sake, she would do it! Putting her hands up to her mouth, she cried: "Oh, you beautiful world! I love you, I love you!"

"I love you, love you!" cried out a joyous voice behind her, and out from the dark pine-trees sprang—not the water-sprite from Wildsee, not the spirit of echo—but a very handsome, sun-burnt man in whose face was the radiance of a great love, in whose sad eyes danced the youth-giving love-light.

"But you wrote that you were not afraid of me!" he complained a moment later. Her face was hidden against his breast, where she clung, and refused to lift it at his bidding.

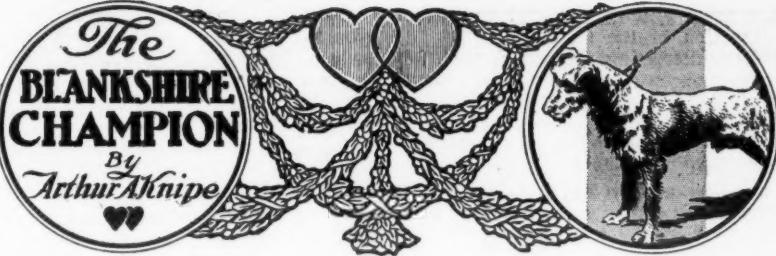
"But I—but then I never thought of your coming!" she gasped, and clung the closer, whereat St. John laughed. Then with the wiliness of his sex he thought him to say solemnly:

"I shall always think, dear, that, after all, you found that you were afraid."

"Oh, no, no, no!" the girl protested; "you are the only person in all the world—except Uncle Stand—that I am not afraid of, and that I trust utterly!"

Then, closing her eyes, she slowly lifted her rosy, quivering face.

"I want something more than confidence, than trust, Candace!" he demanded, playing with his own joy, as a man over thirty generally does. She answered him with her eyes, opening like two violets under the warm sun of his steady gaze. Then he stooped his head, and she received his first kiss. The bees, the river, and the wind saw, and went their several ways laughing and chattering about it, but no one understood.



O I told him I didn't know a St. Gothard from a Spitzenburg, and—I haven't seen him since!"

Miss Willing controlled a strong desire to laugh, and regarded her cousin,

Mrs. Thurston, calmly.

The latter gave an apoplectic gasp. "Katherine!" she exclaimed, and the word came forth like the cork out of a champagne-bottle. Then there was silence for several minutes; an unusual state of affairs when the elder woman was present.

Mrs. Thurston was a large, impressive person, subject to a great many fads, in the defense of which she had acquired a considerable store of poly syllabic platitudes. Occasionally she mixed the language of one in explanation of another, but rarely was she rendered inarticulate. This prolonged muteness, therefore, seemed to indicate a matter of more serious import than the flippant words of Miss Willing would suggest. Still the younger woman was no whit dismayed, and waited patiently for the ultimate explosion.

"Well, I give you up!" Mrs. Thurston said finally, with a ponderous gesture of the right arm. "Goodness knows I don't want you to fling yourself at any man's head, but to feign ignorance of dogs as familiar as those you mention, is a gratuitous insult to a man like Hamilton Drake. I don't wonder you haven't seen him since."

"Nor I," returned Miss Willing, and

this time she failed to suppress a little, gurgling laugh.

"I thought you liked him," said Mrs. Thurston, ignoring her cousin's levity.

"I do," admitted Miss Willing.

"Well, then —" Mrs. Thurston paused.

"Dear Cousin Emily, can't you understand that a girl who doesn't care for dogs, who wouldn't have one about the place for worlds, can't possess much in common with a man whose sole aim in life is the winning of blue ribbons?"

"His passion for dogs need not necessarily intrude upon his"—Mrs. Thurston had the grace to hesitate—"upon—well, upon his wife, for instance."

"But it would intrude," Miss Willing insisted. "He talks 'dog' morning, noon, and night. In some ways I admire Hamilton Drake immensely; but I don't propose to play second-fiddle to a kennel all my life, and he wouldn't give up the poorest of his dogs for the best girl that ever lived."

"Did you ask him?" demanded Mrs. Thurston.

"Certainly not. He was doing the asking!" Miss Willing retorted, with a touch of resentment.

Mrs. Thurston fell back on her original proposition.

"Well, I give you up," she declared in a tone of finality, and then added: "It must be a great disappointment for your poor mother."

"Oh, I'm not so sure that mama wants to be rid of me. Remember, she will be all alone when I go."

At that moment Mr. Thurston and his six-year-old son, Trevor, came into

the room and put an end to further discussion of the topic.

The interesting pantomime that followed concerned the boy and his mother. Mrs. Thurston straightened her back a little more in the presence of her son, nodding her head approvingly as Trevor, gravely polite, wholly self-contained, and preternaturally subdued, greeted his cousin with an outstretched hand. Then he turned to his mother and followed her eyes to the clock. It was a few minutes beyond the hour, and between the two there passed a look of complete understanding. Then this six-year-old, with a bow that included all three, quietly quitted the room.

Mrs. Thurston breathed a sigh of entire satisfaction; as one who would say: "Behold!"

Mr. Thurston sighed, with his teeth shut; sighed almost profanely. Miss Willing's sigh expressed wonder and pity; it might have said: "Poor Trevor!"

Mrs. Thurston broke the silence and addressed her husband. "I wish hereafter, Harry, that when you take the boy out you would see to it that he returns promptly for his regular afternoon period of rest. As it is, you were quite five minutes late, and I must insist upon punctuality. It would be unjust, under the circumstances, to censure Trevor; so, unless you can manage to observe his regimen more strictly, I shall be obliged to send his nurse with you in the future. I cannot have his habits interfered with."

"Habits!" ejaculated Mr. Thurston, turning to Miss Willing. "And he's only six."

Mrs. Thurston smiled upon them from an immense height of superior wisdom.

"But I have hope," continued Mr. Thurston. "For the first time I have hope. This afternoon I took him to the Dog Show, and, by Jove! I nearly bought a dog for him!"

"More dogs," Katherine murmured, but her words were drowned in Mrs. Thurston's fervid exclamation.

"Thank fortune you didn't do it! I

couldn't have permitted him to have it, you know. He's not old enough properly to appreciate the relations existing between human beings and animals; besides, I have never known a dog whose paws were not soiled at one time or another, and the boy would never be presentable."

"Well, it was a near thing, all right," Mr. Thurston went on. "Let me tell you about it. Trevor didn't seem particularly interested in anything; but, of course, that didn't surprise me. He never is interested. However, as we were walking about, a rough-coated terrier leaped out of his box and came straight at the boy, wagging his tail like mad. For a moment I was frightened, but Trevor never turned a hair. He just sat down on the ground and had the dog in his arms, loving it. That was queer enough; but you should have seen the dog. Actually it went wild with delight, and licked the boy's hands and face as if it had found a long-lost friend. There they sat for perhaps ten minutes, and then I suggested that we go and look at the rest of the show; but Trevor wouldn't hear of it, and remained where he was, with his arms about the little beast, radiant with happiness. 'I don't care to see the others, thank you. I'd rather stay with my dog,' he replied to my repeated hints to move on. Then I tried to point out to him that the dog wasn't his, whereupon he asked me to buy it for him. Well, I tell you candidly, I made up my mind to buy it, then and there. It was the first time he had ever showed any interest in anything. I found the man in charge, and, of course, it was the prize dog of the show. Drake's 'Champion,' imported from England at the trivial cost of a thousand pounds. My ardor cooled perceptibly; but Trevor was not much impressed by the price; and when, to give him an idea of the dog's value, I said it would cost as much as a pair of horses, he piped up with: 'Well, father, you said the horses were eating their heads off, doing nothing, since the automobiles came. Can't you sell a pair? I must have my dog.' He insisted, you see, that it was *his* dog,

and we argued the matter back and forth until finally, the only way I could get him away was to tell him he could buy another dog with his own money if he found one like it. 'With *all* the money in my bank?' he asked. 'Yes,' I told him, and then he said good-by to that beast of Drake's as if it were tearing his heart out, and all the way home he'd give a sort of choking sob every few minutes. If there was a chance of Drake's consenting to part with the dog I'd get it for him; but you might just as well ask for the man's head. Still, it gives me hope that Trevor may become almost human when he gets out of leading-strings."

"Evidently the garden was too hot for him. They always overheat the place," said Mrs. Thurston complacently.

"That wouldn't account for the way the dog acted. I never saw such absolute joy in my life," Mr. Thurston protested.

"I can hardly be expected to account for dogs," Mrs. Thurston replied, with a superior smile.

Miss Willing arose. "Really, you know, Harry, I appreciate how you feel about Trevor, but I begin to weary of dogs, and of a certain dog in particular, so I think I'll be going."

Miss Willing's determination to banish Hamilton and his canines was sincere enough, but when, a few days later, the head-lines of a morning paper announced the disappearance of the famous terrier "Blankshire Champion," she acknowledged to herself a genuine feeling of sorrow for the owner, and read the account of the mystery with interest. Dog-fanciers on at least two continents will remember the circumstances. How, at the end of the show, the two men in charge of Drake's entries arrived at Oakdale, Long Island, without the prize-winner. Their stories agreed in the essentials, differing only in minor details. They had brought the dogs from the garden to the special car side-tracked in the Central yards ("without takin' a drop," said one; "just had one small drink," said the other), and they affirmed posi-

tively that Blankshire Champion was locked in with the others. Then they had gone for a "small drink" ("a sandwich," said the other, this time reversing the order), returning to the car perfectly sober (having had but a matter of "two small drinks"). A friend had accompanied them, with whom they talked until nearly time for their train to move out. There had been a delay in coupling their car, so, locking it up carefully, the three went out to investigate the cause (and incidentally procured another "small drink," this statement being concurred in by both). The two were certain that all the dogs were in the car when they came back again; they said good-by to the friend (taking a final "sip" out of the flask provided by that obliging individual), and napped on and off, until they reached Oakdale, where they first missed the Champion. Both showed much indignation at the police, because of a persistent curiosity regarding the history of their friend. He was an unusually honest man; out of employment, it was true, but about to take a position in the West. They could not remember where. So much and no more was made public, and there the matter ended. No further explanation was ever forthcoming.

For the next two or three days Miss Willing looked carefully over all the papers for news of the missing Champion, in spite of the fact that she had definitely dismissed from her thoughts both Hamilton Drake and the particular dog that had been the direct cause of their present strained relations. She told herself that this interest was quite impersonal, purely a matter of news, and wholly outside her professed objection to all dogs, which she "detested."

Then came a combination of circumstances involving Miss Willing in a responsibility that put less important affairs entirely into the background.

Mr. and Mrs. Thurston were forced to go South, where, experience had taught them, the climate disagreed with Trevor. Moreover, as the boy was progressing most favorably in his kindergarten in the city, his mother did not

propose to have her elaborate system of education interfered with for any cause, of course. But he could not be left with the servants; these facts being related to Mrs. Willing, she at once offered to take charge of Trevor, stipulating inflexibly, however, that his nurse should not be included in the invitation, as the woman would only serve as a disorganizing influence to her own servants. This arrangement Mrs. Thurston was reluctantly obliged to accept.

The Thurstons started at once, and Mrs. Willing, having received an urgent telegram from a friend in Washington, followed them on the next train. Thus Katherine Willing, returning from a week's-end visit, was left to face a situation and three letters of instruction.

Her mother's read as follows:

MY DARLING: The enclosed telegram speaks for itself. Poor Sallie Morris really needs me, although I fear I shall be of little more service than that of comforter at the end. I am afraid you will feel that I am deserting you; but what can I do? After all, Trevor is an unusually good child, so you will have no trouble. Take my advice, and let him have his own way. Surely it is not necessary for us to wear ourselves out training Emily Thurston's prodigy. I have always wished she would have a child with will enough to say "I won't." I had, and I confess now to being wholly satisfied. Spoil the boy a little by way of missionary work. I shall be home the first second I can be spared. Your loving MOTHER.

Miss Willing picked up the next letter. It was from Mr. Thurston, begging Katherine to make the boy independent, and warning her to pay no heed to the volume of instruction Mrs. Thurston was then engaged upon. The last letter was just the kind that one would expect from Mrs. Thurston, and Katherine glanced through it hurriedly. At the end she was laughing gaily. "Trevor, my boy, you are going to have a good time, if it is in you," she said half aloud, tearing the carefully prepared document into four beautifully symmetrical pieces and depositing them in the waste-paper basket.

That same afternoon Trevor Thurston began a series of new experiences.

For the first time in his life he crossed Fifth Avenue entirely alone, and this liberty brought with it an exciting responsibility. It was no easy matter to escape from the towering buses that come down on you with surprising swiftness. It had required several attempts, periods of waiting on tiptoe while a carriage passed, and then darting out into the street, only to be driven back by a tooting automobile, coming the other way. But he reached the opposite side finally, flushed and a little breathless; then, with a wave of his hand to Cousin Katherine, watching at the window, he marched bravely into the park, a new Trevor Thurston, grown immeasurably in the last short minutes. While he was still a good distance away from them, he saw several children that he knew, but the ever-watchful nurses were there, also, and, feeling much too big a boy for such associates, he changed his route so as to avoid them. He wandered on by himself, enjoying to the full his independence, testing it in little ways by turning into forbidden paths, or sitting on the ground, half-expecting the "no, no, Trevor," of the exemplary Elspeth, his nurse; he wondered how long it would be before the boys in "truly trousers and Norfolks" would find that he, too, was a "big boy," even though he still wore blouses; he talked to himself, half-aloud when no one was near, asking the absent Elspeth if he might do this or that, knowing full well that her answer would be in the negative, whereupon he did them anyhow, conscious of a delightful feeling of disobedience, and rejoicing in this happy state of freedom. Once he came to a puddle in the path, and stopped for a moment, contemplating it gravely, then he deliberately stepped into it, splashing the water recklessly. Thus was his emancipation complete.

Presently he left the path, and, settling himself on the grass in the thick of some bushes, he began building a wonderful garden, with bits of pebbles for houses and twigs for trees. He was wholly absorbed in this fascinating play, when suddenly there was a rus-

tling in the bushes, and a mud-covered object precipitated itself upon him. A cold nose was thrust into his neck, a moist tongue caressed his face, a rough, hairy body forced itself against him, wriggling hysterically, dumbly apologetic for having knocked him over, but wholly delighted and friendly. Trevor clasped the tremulous creature in his arms and hugged it tenderly. "My dog! My own dog!" he murmured, and then sat mute with pure joy, his little heart full to overflowing.

But this blissful condition of affairs lasted only a moment or two. A shrill whistle sounded near to them, and the next instant a panting, red-faced man came upon them. "Ha! there you are, and a fine chase you gave me!" he grunted, addressing the dog, who nestled closer to the boy.

Trevor was a little frightened at the rough voice of this stranger, but he was much more seriously alarmed for his treasure. Obviously this was the dog's owner, and he went straight to the business of acquiring possession.

"Will you sell me my dog?" he asked.

"Your dog!" exclaimed the man. "Your dog! Why, what's the matter with you? I raised him from a puppy. Owned his father and mother, I did. Your dog! I guess not. Why, you never saw him before."

Trevor lifted his head and looked at the man as he answered: "I saw him at the Dog Show. He's Blankshire Champion, and—and he likes me."

The man shifted his eyes from those of the boy, and moved his feet uneasily.

"Blankshire Champion!" he laughed, with a fine show of scorn. "Lord love you, kid, he's no champion. He's what you call a common dog, ain't no good for anything but rats. Blankshire Champion! Well, hardly."

"Then why does he love me?" Trevor insisted.

"Like as not he takes you for my little boy at home. He never had no sense in his life. Takes up with any kid that comes along. Anyway, that Blankshire dog ain't got no brown spot

on his side like this one. Look and see. That'll show you."

Trevor did look and the evidence seemed conclusive. For a moment he was wholly dismayed; but he remembered the permission his father had given him to buy a dog like the Champion if he found one, and, except for the brown spot, the two were identical, as far as he could see. So his arms tightened about the hairy body, and he lifted his head resolutely. "Will you sell him to me?" he asked.

The man laughed harshly.

"What are you talkin' about? Sure I'd sell him; but I ain't got time to fool with a kid. I've got to see the money when I sell." He leaned over and made as if to take the dog.

"I have money," protested Trevor.

"Oh! quit your foolin', and let the dog go. You ain't got money enough." The man put out a rough hand toward them.

"Please stop!" cried Trevor, hugging his treasure. "Please! Please! You may have all the money in my bank!"

The man straightened himself. He was quite ready to be rid of the dog. Nothing would have suited him better just then; but it certainly seemed like a waste of time to talk of money with this small boy.

"How much is there in your bank?" he asked, conscious of the futility of the question, but also impressed by the evident earnestness of the child.

"Lots and lots!" returned Trevor eagerly.

"That ain't no answer," retorted the man. "I asked how much in dollars."

"Of course I don't know 'zac'ly, but"—an impatient gesture from the other made him hurry—"but there's a ten-dollar gold piece from grandfather every birthday and Uncle Randolph gives me another at the same time, and father gave me five, when I didn't buy the Champion, and there's pennies, bright red ones and silver ones, and—and quite a lot of dollars—"

"How old are you?" the man cut in.

"Six my last birthday," he replied.

The man scratched his head contemplatively as he calculated the probable

contents of the bank. It was a larger amount than he had expected a child could possess, and yet, at the highest estimate of one hundred and fifty dollars, the dog was worth much more. On the other hand, he urgently desired to be quit of the immediate neighborhood, for a time at least, and there were difficulties in disposing of such valuable property at its full value when no rewards were offered. That latter fact in itself was making him very uneasy.

"It ain't enough," he said finally. "The dog's a thoroughbred, you know, and, say—it would be like givin' him away. Ain't you got nothin' else?"

Trevor considered with a sinking heart. He could think of nothing he possessed but a gold watch, which he was not permitted to carry. It was his own watch, his father had told him so, explaining that he was too little as yet to wear it; but a watch was not money, which was all the man seemed to want. Also, the man was becoming impatient, and Trevor was at his wit's end.

"I've only my gold watch," he said pleadingly, choking a little over the words and near to tears. "You may have that and the bank, and—that's all I have in the world."

"Well," answered the man reluctantly, "give 'em here, and take the dog."

Trevor bounded to his feet.

"Truly?" he exclaimed, in a transports of delight.

"Didn't I say so? Let's have the stuff, and I'll be off."

The man stretched out his hand.

"But you'll have to wait till I get them. They're at home, you know, but it won't take a minute," and the boy started, with the dog close at his heels.

"Here! hold on, kid. You leave the dog." The man had sprung forward and laid a hand on the child's shoulder.

Trevor turned. "He's my dog," he said positively.

"Not yet!" said the other. "How do I know you'll ever come back?"

Again the boy became apprehensive. Suppose he should leave the dog and find both it and the man gone on his return? This possibility made him catch

his breath with despair. Suddenly an inspiration came to him. He had been shopping with his mother on occasion, and her method seemed to fit this case exactly.

"You may charge it to—to Trevor Thurston. Purchased by the same. And, besides, I'm not a dog-thief!" The man stepped back, as if he had received a blow, and the boy darted between the bushes, and was out of sight with the dog beside him, running for dear life.

The man swore impatiently as he waited, a prey to much anxiety and anticipated chagrin; but in due time Trevor came back with the bank and watch, which he gave over, thus completing the transaction honorably, on his part at least.

"I'm very much obliged to you for selling me my dog, and I hope your little boy won't miss him very much," said Trevor, holding out a hand politely to bid the stranger good-by. The man shook it silently, his face betraying through its grim lines a feeling almost of kindliness.

"Good-by, sir," he said, touching his hat instinctively. "You're a real gentleman, you are, and I guess my boy won't mind. You see, he likes cats better'n dogs, anyway. And, say, don't put no soap on that brown spot. I never see a dog as dislikes soap on his brown spots like him. Makes him fair vicious. Mind what I tell you, or you'll lose him. Good-by again, sir," and the man vanished.

The boy sank to the ground and clasped the dog in his arms once more.

"Now, you're truly my dog," he whispered in the shaggy ear.

Miss Willing, sitting in the library, vainly trying to interest herself in a book, began to feel a tinge of anxiety as the hours slipped by. She had gone to the window on an average of once every ten minutes since Trevor had disappeared behind the park wall, looking for him to return. After all, he was a very little fellow to be left entirely to his own devices, and the experiment had many elements of uncertainty.

that caused her a considerable degree of worry. She was about to go again to the window when the front door closed, and the faint sound of a child's voice reached her. With a feeling of immense relief she settled back in her chair to await his coming. She heard some muffled noises in the hall, and audible panting as of some one carrying a heavy weight, a pause just outside the entrance, and then the portières parted, disclosing a small and very dirty boy looking delightedly at her over the head of an equally dirty dog, held in his arms.

"I've found my dog," he exclaimed joyfully, but Miss Willing only stared.

"Perhaps you won't like my dog here, Cousin Katherine," he went on, a note of uncertainty coming into his voice. "Perhaps I shouldn't have brought him; but I couldn't leave him at our house. Think how lonesome it would be for a boy with father and mother away, and I don't believe a dog could stand it; do you?"

Then Miss Willing asked for an explanation, and Trevor gave her details, even to his precarious trips across Fifth Avenue with the dog in his arms. Katherine considered the situation with a strong desire to laugh. She was firmly convinced in her own mind of an inflexible antipathy to dogs. She didn't want dogs about her under any circumstances, but this emergency was beyond her personal likes and dislikes. That the beast belonged to Trevor there was not the slightest doubt, after his having been inveigled into paying an enormous price for the cur. She suspected, further, that his heretofore supine obedience had given place to a stubborn determination, and that any attempt to separate dog and boy would bring a storm of protest that she at least was not prepared to withstand. She elicited this much by suggesting that the dog be taken to the servants' quarters.

"But, Cousin Katherine," Trevor protested vehemently, "he's not a servant. He's one of the family!"

Plainly, she could not have the one without the other.

But the factors that really deter-

mined Miss Willing to accept conditions as they stood, were her pleasure in giving the boy his own way for once, and an anticipated delight in the probable failure of Mrs. Thurston's highly elaborated system of child-culture.

It was, of course, a foregone conclusion that the dog should stay, but that he should develop a fascination for the entire household, that the inmates should at once conceive an unbounded admiration for this scrubby gutter dog, that Katherine herself should admit, after a few days, to being distinetly flattered at the little beast's attentions; these things were not expected. Daily they all grew more and more devoted, and he became, in fact, "one of the family." Trevor named him "Champion," insisting that he was exactly like the real Champion at the show; the boy fought valiantly whenever other boys made scornful remarks about his pedigree. The dog ate in the dining-room, slept with Trevor, and—oh! crowning irregularity—his sponge reposed beside the boy's in the bathroom. Miss Willing thought often of Mrs. Thurston, picturing to herself that lady's consternation when her own most orderly establishment had to be rearranged to accommodate a hairy mongrel. In short, the dog was a great success, and Katherine was quite frank in expressing her admiration.

Late one night, or, rather, early in the morning, Miss Willing awoke, to find beside her bed a small, white-faced boy clad in blue pajamas.

"Cousin Katherine," he asked anxiously, "do dogs ever die?"

Miss Willing arose at once, and put on a dressing-gown as she answered, "I suppose they do, Trevor. Is it the Champion?"

"Oh, yes, Cousin Katherine. He's very, very sick. Can't we send for the doctor?"

"But our doctor won't come for a dog, dear," she answered, trying to put an accent of assurance in her voice. "Let me see the dog; perhaps he isn't so very sick, after all."

The Champion wagged his tail manfully, polite and courteous under all

circumstances; but he could not get up to greet them, and closed his eyes wearily, panting all the while in evident distress.

They made him as comfortable as they knew how, and waited for the daylight, hoping he would improve. Trevor, of course, refused to go to kindergarten, even though the Champion, with a great effort and no doubt more to please them than because he wanted anything, lapped some milk.

About eleven o'clock he suddenly became much worse, and Katherine was distinctly worried. The begging eyes of Trevor, sitting dumbly beside the patient, denounced her helplessness.

"Hamilton Drake would know what to do, but I certainly can't ask him," unconsciously she said this aloud.

"I know him!" exclaimed Trevor. "He's the man that owns the real Champion, and mother said he wasn't going to marry you, after all; but I will marry you, Cousin Katherine, indeed I will, if you'll only make my dog well."

This sincere proposal brought a momentary smile to the girl's face, but it was hardly a relief from her trouble, and all the while the dog whined miserably.

Presently Trevor slipped from the room without a word, and went down to the servants' quarters. Here he ordered that Mr. Drake be telephoned for, and the maid, thinking it a message from Miss Willing, complied promptly, and, to Trevor's complete satisfaction, received word that the gentleman so earnestly desired would be over at once.

For the next ten minutes the boy vibrated between the front door and the sick-room, and when Mr. Drake arrived he was waiting to receive him.

"If you please," he began (and here his mother's training helped him, for he was quite self-possessed, although his little heart fluttered with anxiety), "if you please, Mr. Drake, it wasn't Cousin Katherine who sent for you. She didn't like to, you know, because you're not going to marry her; but my dog is very sick, and he's all I have in

the world, and Cousin Katherine said you would know all about curing him I promised to marry her when my dog was well, and so, you see, it is all right, and won't you come and see him right away, please?" He was quite breathless at the end of this long speech, not quite sure of what he meant, but wholly willing to agree to anything in order that his four-footed friend might be saved. Needless to state, this was not the kind of a greeting Hamilton Drake had expected. The message was from Miss Willing, or so at least he understood, and, as he had hurried in answer to it, he had been thinking and hoping for a very different reception. But, after all, he was glad to be there on any terms, and together he and the boy went up-stairs.

As they entered the room, Miss Willing, unconscious of the new arrival, exclaimed almost tragically: "Oh, Trevor, he is no better—and what shall we do?" Then, looking up, she saw Drake, but, far from being embarrassed at his presence, anxiety for the dog was her only thought.

"Thank goodness, you have come at last!" she exclaimed, with a charming lack of logic. "You are the one man we needed. Come at once and see the poor Champion. I couldn't bear to have him die, and I'm afraid to think of what Trevor might do, and—I'm all alone."

Mr. Drake examined the dog critically, turning him over with a professional touch that appealed strongly to Miss Willing, while, to her amazement, the dog evinced an unusual friendliness for this apparent stranger.

"We'd better send for Jeffries. He's the best vet. in town, but I don't think it is very serious."

Such was the verdict, and an hour or so later the dog was pronounced out of all danger, with the boy, worn out with suspense, fast asleep on the bed beside him.

Katherine faced Hamilton Drake over a belated luncheon.

"Now perhaps you'll explain," said the latter. "Since when did you become a lover of dogs, and where did

you run across the Champion? I seem to remember that you were not particularly interested in that dog."

Miss Willing blushed deeply, but she made no effort at defense.

"You may laugh at me as much as you like. I know you have plenty of excuse," she said.

"I'm not laughing," said Mr. Drake soberly.

"Well, you might if you liked," Katherine insisted. "It's funny, and I don't quite understand it myself, but, candidly, I do like that dog more than a little. Oh, I could put it off on Trevor, if I pleased; insisting that it was on his account; but I'm willing to confess my own fondness for the little tyke. Of course I know he's just a gutter dog with queer legs and fur that looks as if it had been brushed the wrong way. He's a dreadful cur, I know, and with all your fine dogs, I suppose you despise him; but he's so smart, being a mongrel—I've always heard they were more intelligent than well-bred animals, and he proves it. Then, he fairly loves the ground Trevor walks on; also, I think, he likes me next best. At any rate, he stays with me while Trevor is at kindergarten. But you will laugh, when you find out the absurd price the boy was forced to pay for him."

"How much did he pay?" questioned Drake.

"I can't tell exactly," Miss Willing answered. "He gave a gold repeating-watch and a hundred and fifty dollars, at least, that was in his bank. Isn't that absurd?"

"He got him cheaper than I did. He

cost me five thousand!" Mr. Drake observed gently.

"You mean you paid that for your dog?" the girl returned, not comprehending this remark.

"I mean that this one *was* my dog. You know the Blankshire Champion was stolen, and it is quite plain to me how he came into the hands of an innocent third party. However, he is still *my* dog!"

Hamilton Drake looked inflexibly at Miss Willing.

"Your dog?" she said vaguely.

"The Blankshire Champion," he insisted.

For a moment the enormity of this state of affairs puzzled her, and then she thought of the boy. "But Trevor—what will he do? It will break his heart to—"

She hesitated, and then stopped abruptly.

"He told me when I came in that he was going to marry you," began Drake evenly. "That seemed to imply a hold upon you. If you could by any means induce him to transfer that claim to me, I'll manage to get along without the Blankshire Champion or all the other dogs I have, if that would please you. Can't you manage it, Katherine?"

This, then, is a complete explanation of how the Blankshire Champion was recovered, and an end to the mystery that has puzzled many experts, who have wondered why the famous terrier is no longer with the entries of Mr. Hamilton Drake from the Oakdale Kennels, but is benched by an unknown exhibitor, one Trevor Thurston, Esq.



SANDERS and the DREAM LADY



Roy Norton

MCARTHY, superintendent of the Golconda, big, bluff, and burly, was unhappy. He stood at the station waiting for the belated train that was to bring with it the special car containing the wife and daughter of the president. McCarthy disliked the waste of time and the rôle of entertainer for women.

"Most of the women I have known have been a nuisance," he said audibly, in his growing annoyance.

"Me, too, Mack," piped up a small voice beside him.

McCarthy turned and swore. His oath was answered with such an emphatic string of profanity that it almost drowned the whistle of the incoming train.

The superintendent looked reprovingly at his companion, Sanders, the stage-driver. The latter, nearly four feet in height and thirteen years old, returned the gaze unblinkingly from a pair of wise-looking Irish-American eyes which belied his age, meanwhile wrinkling his freckles into a mass that served as a harmonious fresco below his red hair. Again he gave speech.

"Most women," he said, "is like ore-wagons; take up too much room on the trail."

The train groaned and creaked along the rails, and came to a whining, perspiring halt.

Sanders dove frantically through the crowd, swearing with earnestness as he

went, and planted himself before the platform. Down the steps surged prospectors, miners, commercial travelers, and women, bumping each others' legs with bales, bundles, and bags, and all in a hurry. But it was not Sanders' day. There was none who knew him—and those who were attracted by his shrill voice crying "Stage-line to Horne," paid small heed to his appeal, and trafficked with his rival. He dodged to and fro to avoid being trampled upon, and tried to gain a fare from that other stage-driver. The rival looked the part, thought Sanders enviously, as he gazed with animosity at the six feet of brawn surmounted by a slouch-hat, and listened to the voice which came with a hoarse bellow.

Sanders turned disconsolately toward his own stage, and in emulation of his elders of the wilder mining-camp up in the hills from which he came, again swore with proficiency.

"Here, you, Sanders," hailed McCarthy's voice from the diminishing crowd, "here are some passengers for you."

The wise-looking little, old face brightened up hopefully, and he came forward unabashed, but colored with self-consciousness before the outburst of merriment of the most beautiful lady he had ever seen. He recalled instantly a story his father used to tell him before he went to rest back up there in the hills, and from then on she became to him the "Dream Lady."

But it wouldn't do to blush, he thought furiously. He must play the part, because, after all, he was a real

stage-driver. He braced his feet widely apart, assumed a hoarse voice, and in answer to her question, "Are you a stage-driver?" vociferated, "You bet your damn life I am."

The Dream Lady laughed with such abandonment that the superintendent's sharp reproof was unuttered.

McCarthy led the way to the stage, assisted the president's wife and daughter to a seat, and then deposited his own huge bulk beside the driver's cushion.

Sanders crawled up to his place, using the spokes of the wheel as a ladder, clutched the reins in his small hands, tripped the brake with much effort, and started his horses with a yelp. He reasoned over the intricacies of the situation, and decided that he had been jested with, humiliated, set upon, and ridiculed. It hurt because the Dream Lady was so beautiful and had such shining eyes.

It was too much, and as a big lump came suddenly into his throat, Sanders almost swallowed the ample chew of tobacco that distorted the contour of his face. Hitherto he had felt the pride of position. Why shouldn't he joy in his independence? He had always made his own way and had been no mark for humor. Why, even when he wanted to go into the stage business after Old Patch, owing to too many stops at the road-house, had simultaneously lost his hold on the reins of horses and of life by falling from his seat, the miners had not treated him as a joke. With great gravity they had subscribed for the purchase of the outfit and had called him "Mister Sanders." True, some of them had winked and grown red in the face when they put their names and their money down, but they had not laughed at him broadly as the Dream Lady did.

Sanders recalled that entry into stardom with a warmth in his heart for McCarthy, who was so outspoken with all men and whom so many feared. The big man, he remembered, had read the list without a change of expression and had even taken the pains to test his ability, or, as the boy

said, "tried him out." Sanders well remembered that trial. The superintendent had hailed an ore-wagon with "Here, Jim; take this boy up there by you, let him take the ribbons and drive to the bottom of the hill. Watch him closely and tell me if you think he can handle 'em."

Jim had grinned as he handed the boy the reins, and Sanders smiled exultantly as he remembered how he had gritted his teeth, throwing the big horses back into line with a jerk, and, because of his own shortness of leg, had ordered Jim to set the brakes. Oh, no—he hadn't passed all his thirteen years around mining-camps and ore-teams and horses for nothing.

That was a triumph worth while when the big superintendent gravely recognized his drivership and subscribed more than all the others put together, saying as he did so: "A kid that has got that much nerve isn't a kid; he's a man, and shall have a man's chance."

That wasn't all that McCarthy had done. He had stopped the miners from laughing at him openly, and had always thrown all the patronage to Sanders' line that he could. McCarthy had a fine scorn for appearances, and invariably climbed up and took a place by the boy's side on the front seat, from which post of vantage he smoked and watched the handling of the horses. Once, when Sanders had gone to sleep on the way up the long grade, because he had been up all night when the baby brother died and joined father, McCarthy, who happened to be a passenger that day, had put his arm around him and had driven through before the boy knew it. McCarthy never laughed at him, and McCarthy was a big man. A real superintendent who worked many men and who was a king up there where all those men worked. McCarthy was a trump.

But the Dream Lady, in the seat behind him, had laughed. Sanders felt that he hated her, but with it all there was a wistfulness and a wish that she would not laugh at him again, because it hurt. There was something so like

music in it that it made Sanders wish she would take him in her arms.

The stage-driver's mind went rambling away to the stories he had read in the ten-cent books he had secured from the miners, where the heroine was always a beautiful young lady who always fell in love with the hero, who, if not a stage-driver, was a brave young detective. They always married, and, as far as he could recollect, lived happily ever after. Sanders wasn't quite sure that he wanted to marry the Dream Lady and live happily ever after, but he was quite positive that if she would give him a chance he would love her—would love her very much indeed.

Why didn't Mack McCarthy, who was so big and so strong, and who had such dark eyes and whose black hair was fringed with gray, marry the young lady? He would ask him. He did.

McCarthy's pipe almost dropped from his mouth in astonishment, and his only reply was "Huh!" Then he smoked again, and somehow Sanders felt rebuffed.

It really seemed like a very short drive that day, and when the stage rolled up to the front of the superintendent's office, which had been prepared as a temporary home for the visitors, Sanders was quite surprised at the speed they had made.

The Dream Lady relented as she alighted, and showed appreciation by smiling at him and saying: "Why, you are a real stage-driver, after all, aren't you!" Sanders felt his bosom swell with gratified pride, but to play the part well felt compelled to gaze at her nonchalantly, take a fresh chew of tobacco, and make no reply.

The days changed for Sanders. There was no longer a weariness in the drag up-hill from the American to the Golconda. This was because of the Dream Lady. Really, if he could only talk to her when he went there and saw her, it would be different; but speech left him with abruptness in her presence, and he felt that all he could do to preserve his dignity was to re-

frain from grinning broadly, even though he could not answer her questions. His warmth toward the big man increased, because he alone understood. He was a real friend.

There was something odd about it all, he pondered. McCarthy took more pains than he used to, because he shaved every day, and had a new hat that he wore when not going through the mine. The Dream Lady, too, showed signs of the summer's progression. She looked at the superintendent differently, and there was something in the look that led Sanders to know that she saw in this white-hatted, silent man a master of men and things. Ah! he could love her for that.

The Dream Lady didn't seem to be as happy as she had been, and there was trouble between her and her mother. The boy wondered at that, and spent his idle time in vain speculations. True, he had heard but little, but it was a certainty that the Dream Lady and her mother were not on good terms. So he hated the mother.

Worst of all, McCarthy somehow seemed to feel the change, and Sanders' heart ached for him with a dull, sympathetic hurt which required constant repression. Of course he couldn't talk to the man—that would never be understood; besides, there wasn't the same camaraderie that there had been, because the man was quieter, if possible, than he used to be, and he spent more time working underground, as if avoiding something. The boy felt aggrieved. The Dream Lady was very fine, but there was no one too good to be friends with McCarthy, and she must have said something to have changed him so.

Another sore spot was that "Big Stiff" of a yard-boy up at the Golconda, whom Sanders hated because he had winked one day when the superintendent and the Dream Lady were talking together in front of the big shaft-house. Sanders waited his chance, all his turbid blood aflame with a desire for retaliation, not for an offense against his own person, but against his hero.

There came a day, as the summer waned, when his chance was upon him, and being one of action he seized it. There was none in sight, as the stage came to a halt near the blacksmith-shop, save the "Big Stiff." Sanders crawled deliberately down from his perch, took off his much-patched coat, laid his hat on top of it, and before the "Big Stiff" was aware of forthcoming trouble, lashed into him wildly with both fists. This was his day, he thought jubilantly, so he fought grimly, using teeth, feet, and hands with equal effect, and heeding not his adversary's shrieks and lamentations.

Oh! it ended ignominiously for Sanders! Before he was really at the acme of his work, McCarthy came up from behind, seized both belligerents by the slack of their clothing, tore them apart, and held them in the air exactly as he would a pair of puppies. Sanders continued with set teeth and blazing eyes to kick and strike wildly, although held high in the air. The "Big Stiff" wailed with much anguish, and in loud tones protested his innocence.

"Sanders, you little devil," the superintendent said, "you are a fighting little brat, I have heard, but it won't go here. When you come to this mine you come peaceably, or you will have to"—and then, observing the hurt look in Sanders' eyes, his own softened, and he concluded lamely—"have to fight me."

Of course it wouldn't do to tell the cause of the enmity against the yard-boy—that would have been squealing; but the martyr game was a hard one, and Sanders sympathized with himself for many days. But there was worse yet. Sanders' mother heard of the fight when she came to the mine to get the mending. McCarthy was as great a hero to her as to her son. It was this dark-eyed, quiet man who had made life so much easier for her after her husband's death and had put the boy "in the sthage bizinniss like a rale castle Oirishmon in the ould countrhy. No jantin-ca-ar, but a rale hack, to be shure!"

That night Sanders had another bat-

tle, and when it ended his mother cried while he stood sullenly by, feeling that had he not been ashamed to fight with her, she could lay no claim to physical superiority.

The tamaracks changed color and the grass on the open spaces grew gray with age. The stream was a small river now and the grouse in the hills changed plumage. The big peaks put on winter caps* of whiteness and the mornings were cold. Another summer was dead.

So, with the flight of warmth, the stage-driver came to the mine one morning and found the Dream Lady and her mother waiting for the down stage.

McCarthy was trying to look unconcerned, but his eyes were very deep and lonely. The Dream Lady had a veil over her face, and no longer laughed as gaily as when she came to the hills for the summer. Only her mother talked—talked volubly and sharply and unceasingly as Sanders took them aboard.

The superintendent stood awkwardly by the wheel. "Some day we shall meet again," Sanders heard him say. The Dream Lady turned away without a word and looked toward the mountain-tops, as though bidding them farewell.

The man did something very unusual that day, something unprecedented. He walked all the way around the team, tightening up a strap or testing a buckle here and there. Then, when the others were busy adjusting their belongings in the narrow space, he said: "Sanders, my boy, drive very carefully down the Turn Again grade. It's a bad place. Be a game little cuss, and hold the reins tight. Always remember to be careful there." Sanders wondered at the admonition as the horses swung out and down the hill.

The Dream Lady's mother became a dragon in the stage-driver's air-castle, perhaps because above the clanking of the vehicle and the clicking of the shod heels her voice arose in scolding tones at regular intervals.

Once the Dream Lady rebelled, and

said: "Oh, mother, please stop. I am old enough to understand." Then there was silence.

The horses felt the coolness of the morning, and were mettlesome. Their hoofs rang spitefully on the frost-hardened roads, and they tugged at the bits until Sanders' tough little arms ached with the persistent pull. They surged against the lines or jumped, as if frightened, away from familiar objects. The driver's legs straightened out like small pillars, to the brake that had been made long enough for his foot to reach; but to-day it didn't seem to hold well.

A weed blew airily across the road, and the off-horse shied—shied so violently that Sanders swore under his breath and gave a quick jerk. The horse felt that Sanders was nervous. Up the short rise they went, and then swung over the brow and down on the crooked reach of Turn Again grade, while far below them, and alongside, the river whipped its foamy way over the boulders.

"What the devil ails you?" yelled Sanders, as the off-horse suddenly broke into a run. Sanders' foot struck out madly for a greater purchase on the brake, a defective bolt snapped somewhere, and he nearly fell from his seat. The team wildly plunged forward.

Sanders couldn't remember all that happened when he thought it over afterward, because it took so long. There came to him vaguely the screams of the Dream Lady's mother, regrets that if he had to have a runaway it should come on this, of all days, and all the time there was the battle with the horses. The wayside was no longer familiar. It was a mere panorama of looming gray rocks that rose up suddenly and swept past in a blur. The road was a living, twisting thing, that tried all the time to evade him; and before him, with outstretched heads and sinewy bodies straining for ever greater reaches, were two terribly insane animals, bent on destruction.

Down the deadly hill, lurching, swaying from side to side, or violently

jumping over boulders, they went, but Sanders sat firm, with his browned hands twisted desperately into the lines. In his ears rang again and again the words: "Be a game little cuss, and hold the reins tight."

At the top of his shrill voice he called to the horses, trying vainly to check them—called them by name, cursed, appealed, or commanded, and all with no effect. Through him there ran the realization that there was but one chance to save the Dream Lady, and that was to keep his way in the road, at least until the frightful grade of "Turn Again" stretched smoothly out over the shallows of the lowland, away from the river and from the high bank. And in this time of stress his unselfish little heart recked not of the harm or death that might be his own lot, but dwelt on the hurt that might come to the girl, or on the sorrow that would fall upon the superintendent's head. He thought of his mother, and what would happen to her if he failed to survive, and of the end of all his glorious career. And the drumming of the hoofs whipped ever faster and faster as the pace increased.

Up from below, with bells tinkling on the leaders, and driven by one who carelessly whistled, came an ore-wagon. The whistle stopped abruptly, and the driver was startled into action, but too late. Sanders had seen the danger, and made instant choice. It was that his own viciously running horses must be swung up into the bluff to avoid being hurled into the river below. He reached far out, and caught a tenacious twist in the line nearest the bank, gritted his teeth, and with a sudden jerk threw his entire weight back in one mad fling. The rapidity of previous panoramas was outdone. Many things happened at once. There was a sharp crash, which reverberated back into the hills, the splintering of wood, and a confusion of struggling horses. Sanders felt himself hurled high into the air, heard the whistle of the wind shrilling in his ears, accompanied by the groans and screams of the maimed animals. He had a vision of wildly

striking, kicking hoofs, into which he plunged as though shot from a catapult, and then it grew dark, very dark.

Sanders thought something smelled bad—just as the hospital did that time when father was taken there. He tried to raise his arm, but there was some big wooden thing on it, and it hurt. He rested a while, trying to remember what had happened.

Then he decided to open his eyes, but one was blind, because there was a cloth wrapped around his head. Finally he looked out with the other one with much effort, and discovered, to his amazement, that he was in the superintendent's office; only it didn't look natural—there were so many bottles and things around on tables.

Well, it wasn't worth while thinking and puzzling about it, so he would take another short sleep. The Dream Lady came to him vaguely at intervals, and there were many whisperings.

Sanders tried to sit up, but a cool hand restrained him. "Not yet, dear boy," said the Dream Lady, and then his mind became active, and he wanted to know where the stage was.

"You are through with the stage, my little driver," said the Dream Lady. "As soon as I can take you, you are

going home with us, away back into the East, where there are no stages, but only schools and other little boys to play with. Where you will not have to work, but just become a man. You are going with me."

"Not by a damn sight," said Sanders, relapsing into his old-time emphasis. "I've got to stick with Mack. I ain't goin' to leave him. I'm goin'—" and then before Sanders' voice could become a mere broken wail, he heard another and a deeper voice as it came to the bedside. It was on the side where the obnoxious bandage was, and somehow he couldn't turn his head to see; but with the other eye he saw a man's hand reach out across him and grasp the hand of the Dream Lady, saw a smile of tenderness break over her face, and saw her blush as the big voice went on: "Sanders, you are going East, but it won't be long until I am there to see you, and maybe some time we will all come back out here together."

Sanders smiled, but, desiring the full approbation of the big man, murmured: "I done my best, Mack, but they runned away. And I held on like a game little cuss. You know I did, don't you?"

And the big voice had a note of laughter in it as it rumbled: "Yes, you did, little partner."



A MESSAGE

STAY not for me; your step surpasses mine.
You scale the heights, while I plod through the plain.
I must walk slowly till the Sun's decline,
You must mount faster, if the top you'd gain.
'Tis not for me to touch the flaming star,
You need not search for violets by the way.
The great rewards for great achievement are,
The labor and the prayer refresh my day.
Yet as I look, dear love, into your eyes,
An inspiration wings my humble task.
May some faint perfume from my flowers arise
To tell you I am here; 'tis all I ask.
Yours the blue sky; mine the brown earth. God send
A meeting to us! Heaven's at the end.

JOHNSON MORTON.

VISIONS OF AN OPTIMIST



BY
MARGARET
SUTTON
BRISCOE

V. ON REMEMBERING

HERE is nothing quite like remembrance; that is the one thing which we have, we older ones, that youth has not. The young do not envy us, for they know nothing of a joy that they have never tasted, and to youth, in its mighty activity, *remembering* seems an unprofitable and an unexciting pastime. Why should they sit in the sun and think? No, they have too much to do, they tell us; and so they have. It is for them to act; for us, who have acted, to dream of what we have done and seen, and now, taught through our own experience, watching, with opened eyes, the experiences of others, to transmit what we know by other means than action.

I talk as if I were a hundred years old and had been "remembering" for a generation. As a matter of fact, I speak with such enthusiasm because I have only now, within a week, discovered this delight of increasing age. I, too, have supposed that in youth and action lay the juices of life. I have learned only recently what pleasures lie awaiting me. It does not sound especially wifely, but if I must tell the truth, I believe that this new outlook on life would never have come to me if I had not been briefly separated from my husband. King was not connected in any way with my childish days. I never met him until I was old enough

to be married to him; my life with him is very much in the present. Suddenly, unexpectedly, I have found myself back, back in the past, and I have learned what the past may come to mean to me in my future—my past childhood, my past middle life and, if it so happens, even my past old age. This is the history of my revelation.

I have run away from home! It is not so bad as it sounds, however, for my associate in flight is only my old schoolmate, Patricia Golden, and King himself escorted me to the train which brought me here to this little seaside hotel where Patricia Golden arrived the day after I did.

The fact of the matter was—no, I shall have to confess to a plural here—the *facts* in the case were these: I was quite tired, or King thought that I was, and we had a new cook. "Here you've invited Patricia Golden to visit us," said King, "and I know just what will happen. You'll be entertaining all the time, and the new cook will go. Moreover, she is only a good plain cook as yet, and the kickshaws that Patricia Golden is used to are not in her line. Why don't you invite Patricia to go to the seashore for a little holiday with you? You need a rest and you need a change. I want you to do it."

Of course I vowed I wouldn't think of such a thing—and then I went; and down at the bottom of things the real reason I finally consented, was that I was ashamed to tell the Optimist that Patricia Golden was coming to visit us.

I had grown a little foolishly conscious, and conscience-stricken, too, over that knot in the Optimist's watch-chain. I heartily wished that he would untie it, yet I didn't quite like to ask him to do so. I knew just what the Optimist would suspect when he learned that Patricia had been asked to visit us. If he did not say *Subrikingue*, he'd think it. The worst of it was he would be thinking only the truth. The end of it was that here we are, Patricia and I, having a reminiscent schoolgirl kind of a time together, in a pleasant little hotel, far enough south to make life in the open air and on the beaches quite like summer-life, even at this season. We have adjoining rooms, and we brush our hair together every night, and we are renewing our youth in various similar ways.

Once, years ago it was, I had ventured to mention to Patricia that it had always seemed so odd to me that she was not married. She didn't answer me for a moment, and then she only laughed and said easily: "It is odd—isn't it?" But in that moment, before she replied, I had time to be sorry, so sorry, that I had said any such word. The strangest look had passed—no, rippled—over her features. It was barely a flash, as she is so self-controlled, but it told me to hold my tongue concerning something which I did not in the least understand and had no right to speculate upon. If she has a story, it is hers. She is not the kind to share it. We have known each other forever, but I am not Patricia Golden's confidante. I feel she keeps her own counsel, that she has no confidantes, and needs none. She has been living abroad for years, quite independent of her family.

It seems odd, but I have yet to meet the woman who went to school with a girl younger than herself. "Yes, indeed," such is the way we usually express it. "Yes, I remember her perfectly. She was the dearest girl. We went to school together. I was one of the little girls, and I can remember how admiringly I looked up to her." I imagine the statement, when made, is

in every case as strictly true as it is of Patricia and me. I did go to school with her, and she is older than I. But what constitutes a great difference of age for schoolgirls is a negligible quality later in life.

Patricia is now what the Optimist would call "our age." If there is any difference between us, which I sometimes doubt when I look at her, any casual observer would say that the advantage was in Patricia's favor. I don't think that she looks a day over twenty-five, certainly not when, as now, she is wearing her out-of-door costume. She dresses quite superbly at other and more formal times. Why shouldn't she? If she chose to dress in spun gold and diamonds, she would still not be dressed out of keeping with her fortune; yet Patricia is quite unspoiled by her wealth, and she seems to be enjoying life here with me, in this quiet, simple hotel. There has, so far, been nothing particularly exciting here to record; what there may be now to chronicle I cannot pretend to say, for what is, to me, a most astonishing feature, has suddenly dawned upon our horizon.

I was walking through the hotel corridor looking for Patricia, when I heard her voice outside of one of the long windows that open from the parlor to the porch, where early roses are climbing on the wooden posts.

"The roses," Patricia was saying. "Yes, they are charming, aren't they? Certainly you shall have one—two, if you like."

"Haven't you a pin?" said another voice. I stood perfectly motionless, rooted to the floor.

"No, I haven't a pin—none I can spare," said Patricia, in her cool, easy tones, yet always warm enough to be ever so pleasing. "Could you use a hairpin?"

"Just like a woman!" laughed the other voice.

"What do you expect me to be like—a man? Here's an invisible hairpin."

"An invisible hairpin!" retorted the voice—I stepped softly to the window and looked out. There, in a rose-

screened angle of the porch, stood the Optimist. Patricia, with a fine wire hairpin, was attaching a rose to the lapel of his coat!

The cooling and harmless draft of the region, the blood-colored sangaree, stood in a glass pitcher, frosted by ice, on a small table under the roses of the porch. It was a pretty scene, the red pitcher, the red sangaree cups, the red roses, the bright sunshine. I looked across the table at my two old friends, and as the minutes slipped by and we sat chatting, chatting, I thought that if only King had been there there could have been nothing more to wish for in that hour.

"No more for me, thank you," said Patricia, holding her sangaree cup out of harm's way.

"Oh, just a wee nippie," urged the Optimist.

"It will go to my head," protested Patricia.

"Where do you want it to go?" said the Optimist. "What are you taking it for? I heard such a nice old lady this morning raking her waiter over the coals for watering her mint-julep. 'Don't put water in my julep!' says she. 'The ice will melt soon enough.' When you are in Turkey, do as the turkeys do."

"Bosh!" said I. "This isn't much more than pink water. Fill our glasses. We will drink to Auld Lang Syne."

Then we drank silently, and not without real feeling.

"Do you remember—" began Patricia presently. Every other sentence we spoke began the same way.

"Remember!" repeated the Optimist, gazing at her sentimentally. "Haven't I been trying all these years to forget?"

"You dear, old humbug!" said Patricia. "You haven't changed a particle, have you? Do you remember—"

"Of course I remember," said the Optimist. "Is there anything I forget—anything that happened way back there? When King told me that you two girls were down here—together, I

stood it as long as I could, and then—I didn't try to stand it. I came. I knew just what was going on. 'Don't you remember—?' 'Do you remember—?' Hasn't this been a great reunion?"

He paused, and then—

"Tell the truth, both of you," he cried suddenly. "Have either of you had such a grand good time in years? What we might like, if anything could make us happier, would be to see some old playmate walk in—Jasper, perhaps, or Sarah Stillwater. You can meet and you can love all kinds of people, in all kinds of places, but when all is in, girls, there's no friend like the old friend."

Can it be that this is what old friends are for? Are they meant, not merely to be loved and cherished, but also to be utilized as "domesticated recording angels" warranted to make us remember the errors of our youths, our innocent frolics; thus keeping us tender toward the duplicated departures of later generations.

Then, too, who but an old friend dares to talk to us with that intimate—not to say brutal, candor, which, as the dignities of age hedge us about, we can hear from no other lips? The old friend shows us no respect whatever—and how pleasant and young we feel when disrespectfully handled. Also—isn't it salutary?

All the while that I was thinking these thoughts, I was still greedily listening to the running fire of *remembering* that Patricia and the Optimist kept up as fast as each of them could talk, drifting now and then into the frankest and most personal banter on present-day events.

"How long has it been since we three were together?" I broke in.

"Don't!" cried Patricia. "You married people are so merciless. We poor unmarried ones, the Optimist and I—we are sensitive about dates." She didn't care a pin really, and showed she didn't.

"Fiddlesticks!" I answered. "Neither of you care. I wish you did. *I* care, because I have some one to keep

young for. When I see the tiniest wrinkle trying to creep in—or a gray hair—it worries me."

"Yes, it does," said the Optimist. "Her daughter Daphne has told me of those 'hare-hunts.' It's a serious mistake—this having children old enough to talk. They tell—they tell everything."

"*Hare-hunts!*" repeated Patricia. "What is a hare-hunt?"

"Ask her," said the Optimist.

"Ask him," I retorted. "He seems so informed." (How angry I should have been had any one else so jeered at me!)

"It's like this," said the Optimist. "You let down your hair, sit in front of a mirror, and your two oldest children stand on little footstools on either side of your chair; each child has a small pair of scissors, with which they carefully cut out every gray hair as they find them. That's what is called a hare-hunt."

"Is it a hare-hunt when you haven't any children and have to do it for yourself?" asked Patricia.

The Optimist looked at Patricia reproachfully. "You don't mean to tell me—" he said.

"I do," answered Patricia coolly. "It isn't that I mind the gray hairs—not what other people think of them, that is; but I can't bear to see them myself. It discourages me. I haven't seen either of you since I went abroad—ten years ago. It's awful when we begin to talk in decades."

"What's the odds?" said the Optimist. "Here we are—together again—just so much older, but each of us very brave about it. Why should we grow older? We don't have to. It's not the fashion to be old any more. Teeth used to fall out and eyes fall in—it's not done now."

"I miss the dear old ladies," said Patricia. "Where have they gone? I looked forward to sitting in the chimney-corner some day, knitting—knitting and uttering phrases, and calling everybody 'my dear.' I never shall."

"Do begin now!" said the Optimist, with interest.

Patricia took no notice of him.

"I met such a dear old lady out walking on the beach yesterday," she said. "She was eighty years old, if she was a day. She had perfectly white hair—and no hat on her head! I've got over the shiver at seeing old ladies wear hats in place of bonnets, but I can't get used to them *bareheaded*. When it comes to gray hair towels in the breeze—"

"I know just how you feel," I said. "We were brought up in our day to reverence gray hairs—weren't we?"

"Your own—or those of some one else?" queried the Optimist. "What about those hare-hunts?"

"My old lady," went on Patricia, "was wearing a short walking-skirt, very short. She mentioned it to me. 'You see, I don't have to be troubled with holding this skirt up,' she said. I almost answered that I thought she might be exercised in holding it down—but I didn't say so."

"Ahem!" coughed the Optimist. "At what age is it proper to cease wearing short walking-skirts?"

"Really, I don't know," said Patricia impartially.

She glanced down at her own short skirt. "It's quite an art," she said, "at our age, to dress so as not to be kittenish, and yet not to be elderly, either. It's a line you can't learn of your dressmaker—nor"—she looked over at the Optimist—"of your tailor. I've seen," she went on, "some men who at—at—say thirty-five or forty, is it?—dressed as kittenishly as some women of that same youth—or age—or middle age or whatever you are pleased to call it."

She looked the Optimist over critically. "You," she admitted generously, "always were apt to be the best-dressed being in any room you entered; but, if I may venture, why is your watch-chain worn in a coquettish little snarl? It has worried me ever since you came here. If you can't untangle it—let me try."

She stretched out her hand—such a pretty, white, slim hand.

The last thing one would expect to embarrass some friend is the little shaft

before which he goes down. It surprised me to see the Optimist flush slightly, and then, as if protectingly, he fingered that annoying knot. I sat looking down into the glass I held.

When we were all very young together, the Optimist and Patricia had been the best kind of friends—sometimes; even then, I had wondered if there might ever come to be any closer tie between them. Now, as the Optimist waited there, his finger on the knot, I felt my heart beat fast and hard suddenly. Had I builded better than I knew, inviting Patricia to visit me and running away with her?

The silence grew strange, embarrassing. "But this isn't a snarl in my watch-chain," said the Optimist presently. "It's—ask the lady, here," he laughed, recovering his spirit. "Ask this lady what it means when a man carries a knot in his watch-chain. She may answer you that it merely means he needs a Subrikinque; but, then, you still can ask her what a Subrikinque means."

"A Subrikinque!" repeated Patricia. "What may that be?"

"Oh, dear, dear, dear!" I cried. "See what I have done!"

The contents of my glass of sangaree ran over the little table.

"How could I be so careless!" I cried.

The Optimist looked at me oddly. He showed no interest in the catastrophe while Patricia helped me to mop up the red rivulets.

"We have talked of old friends," he said, "and we have all three agreed that nothing takes their place. Now, what about old loves? Sometimes I think it's quite the same thing. I wonder if there is any love in life like what ripens from the little sweetheart loves of childhood. Think what they have to 'remember' together! An old love—it's an old glove to your hand, an old shoe to your foot. You think that it is all over and forgotten—some foolish quarrel has parted you, perhaps. You meet again, and suddenly—"

He paused and sat looking straight at Patricia.

I am not lacking in self-control, and I have some courage, but it really seemed to me as if I could not sit there and hear an offer of marriage made right before my face. Subrikinque I may be, but some sense of decency I have. I could not upset my empty sangaree cup over again, so it was only left for me to rise, with some kind of a trumped-up excuse, and vanish. This was what I was about to do, when the Optimist took out his watch to glance at it, and to exclaim at the lateness of the hour. He walked quickly to the steps of the porch, and, shading his eyes in his hand, looked out toward the hill behind which the sun was just about to set.

"Come," he said, turning back to us. "We've had our cup o' kindness. What do you two say to one of our old handicap walking-races? Patricia, I'll give you the same old five-minute start you used to have, and then beat you, walking to that summer-house up on the hill. The lady here, she could always walk faster than you. We will give her her old three-minute handicap. Will you race, girls?"

"Yes," said Patricia. She rose, as if glad to move. Something in her face caught my attention. I turned and looked again at the Optimist. Yes, I was not fanciful, there was some deeper feeling evident with them both. Was it earnest, then—this meaning talk of old days, old loves? Was it possible that some foolish, foolish quarrel had separated these two—and now—I made up my mind quickly. I would not say so, not yet; but I did not intend to enter that handicap race. Patricia was already off, looking back, laughing, and waving her hand to us as she hurried away down the gravel walk and toward the summer-house on the distant hilltop. I looked up at the Optimist. He was following her with his eyes, and with a tenderness in his face that he seemed to make no effort whatever to conceal.

"I—I—think I'll go and—and lie down," I said. "I'm a bit—a bit tired. I think I won't race—not to-day."

"Nor I," said the Optimist. He was gazing up the hill toward

the summer-house, and, following the direction of his eyes, I saw Patricia hurrying along the hill-path, but it was not Patricia the Optimist was watching. Walking toward the summer-house, by a second path that led windingly up from the cove below, was another figure—a man's. He was not walking as Patricia walked, quickly and strongly, but slowly, almost painfully, with pauses. There was something strangely familiar to me in his gait, his figure. I turned and looked at the Optimist, who stretched out his hand and laid it on my arm as if to bid me be silent. His eyes still followed the two figures ascending by different paths, each unseen by the other—but that could not be for long. At the door of the summer-house the two paths met.

"He is staying at the little sanatorium across the cove," said the Optimist. "I ran across him there—yesterday. I promised to meet him up there in the summer-house, at this hour—to watch the sunset with him. He wouldn't come to the hotel, he avoids every one. He doesn't know—I didn't dare tell him that you and Patricia were here."

"It's not—is it—Jasper?" I whispered.

"Yes," said the Optimist. "Patricia will meet him in a moment more, now, and then— It isn't possible you haven't known why Patricia has never married? There was a foolish, foolish quarrel, and in the rebound the other woman—there's always one waiting—captured him."

"But—but," I cried, "his wife!"

"He is free," said the Optimist. "She will never trouble him again. The news came some months ago, he says. They have not seen each other for years, he told me yesterday."

"But he is ill, an invalid! He was not expected to live."

"He didn't want to live. He will want to—now."

I stood breathless, watching the two figures on the hill drawing nearer, nearer. When immediately opposite each other they each stood suddenly still, as if turned to stone.

Whether either of them spoke it was impossible to tell. There was no clapping of hands, no apparent greeting, but presently they both quietly moved, as if by common consent, to the ridge that overlooked the western slope, where they sat down on the grass, a little separated from each other, facing the sunset. It seemed to me that the whole world, with the Optimist and me, silently watched them, waiting. After a little while Patricia rose. She stood above Jasper, looking down at him, and then—we could see her plainly, and the gesture seemed to speak—she stretched out her hand to him, held it down to him, bending a little over him; he took her hand, was helped by it to his feet, and stood beside her. They turned and walked down the hill toward us. The two moving figures seemed as one against the sky-line. It was all over while you might have counted a few hundred.

"That's settled!" said the Optimist, and he sank back in his chair.

I turned and looked at him.

"Yes," I said, and I spoke bitterly, for I love Patricia—and there were other reasons, too, why I felt desperately disappointed. "Yes," I said, "and that's the way it will always be, just as we saw it on the hill. Why shouldn't Patricia have some one who would lift her up—some one, good and kind and strong, some one who we all know would make her happy, some one whom she could lean on, and—"

"Should he also wear a knot in his watch-chain?" asked the Optimist, but I would not heed him.

"To wait all these years," I cried, "to be all this while lonely, fretting her poor heart out—" I stopped suddenly.

The Optimist's fingers were on the knotted kinks in his watch-chain, and his eyes were set far off in the distance. My voice died lamely away. What was I saying to him? Who is it—who is it—that makes him unhappy?—our good, dear Optimist! For he is sometimes unhappy. If it is Patricia—and yet he seemed only glad to think of Jasper with her.

"Patricia will soon have him on his feet," he said.

"You'll see. They are sure to be happy. I can't expect you, madame, to agree with me; but the marriage of two old friends is, when all is said, with a few glorious exceptions, the solid rock to build on. That bond of childhood—what is there like it? How those two will help each other and remember—what neither should forget."

"It occurs to me," he added, his eyes filled with quizzical laughter at what he seemed to read in my face, "that for a Subrikinque in such pink of training you are sometimes a bit misled—eh? Wasn't there a moment when I distinctly detected on your part—an effort toward propelling Patricia and your humble servant into a little tête-à-tête in that dove-cote summer-house up yonder? I thought you were a 'bit tired,' eh? Don't you 'feel like lying down?'"

I looked up the hill, at the couple

still slowly advancing. "You can't ever say Subrikinque to me again," I cried. "Who was the Subrikinque there? Who did that?"

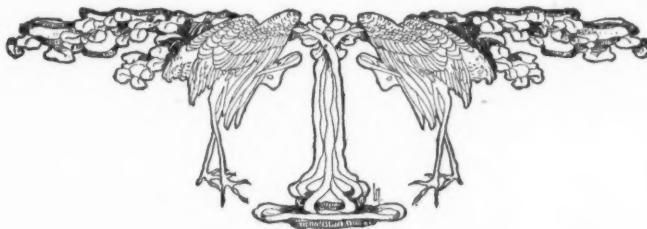
"I did," said the Optimist. "And the only reason you are so disgruntled is because you had no finger in the pie."

"Subrikinque!" I retorted.

The Optimist rose. He stood bowing low to me, his hand on his heart—or where a man's heart should be. "I have qualified, madame," he said, "under a so, so eminent teacher."

After all, it looks as if it were to prove a profitable vacation for the three of us. Patricia has found here—all that she asks for on earth, apparently. The Optimist has qualified as a first-grade Subrikinque. As for me, I have learned to pray a new prayer. From now, and all through my old age, and until death I shall use it daily:

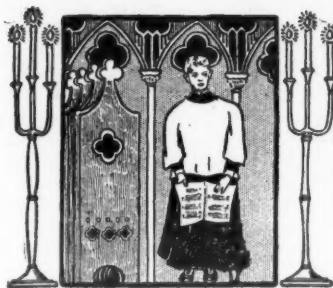
"Lord, keep my memory green."



RENUNCIATION

SINCE I must live, yet shut thee from my soul,
Renounce the grave, sweet language of thine eyes—
That far above all speech I dearly prize—
Fix my crushed purpose to some alien goal
That wears no hint of Love's bright aureole,
Then, Dearest, when my hope cruelly dies
Invoke for me the freighted argosies
Of kindly sleep; that in its rapt control
I rest, and feel the solace of sleep; dream
That what is not may for the moment seem
Truth's very self; dead ecstasies that fill
My hungering heart with their illusive thrill;
And beg for me (Oh, poor and paltry bliss!)
The dreamèd satisfaction of your kiss!

MINNIE FERRIS HAUENSTEIN.



THE TAMING OF BILLY

By Jeannie Pendleton Ewing

IKE many other persons of genius, Billy was not appreciated by his nearest and dearest. His mother, Mrs. Milligan, a tidy body, with more than her share of house-work to do, and a consequent desire for peace and quietness during those periods which she devoted to rest, had been known to check his beautiful voice with an irritated "Hesh!" or "Quit!" Sometimes came the added rebuke: "Can't you so much as chop a little wood without raising the neighborhood?"

But Billy, after momentary obedience, sang on. He was a born mockingbird, or catbird, or bobolink, though he wore knickerbockers, and the monotonous sort of cap that goes like an epidemic through a public school. He was one of those boys who will drop any form of work or play at the first faint "Tirra-la-da" of an approaching brass band, to shout, "Come on, fellers!" and be off like the wind to meet it. He was in the eddy round every accessible piano-organ, he flattened his freckled nose against the windows of phonograph agencies; while a job of distributing programs when "the minstrels" came to the nearest theater was sufficient to stock Billy up with popular songs for the next three months.

With this large and elastic repertoire, and some sarcastic imitations of motor-car "honks," and the toots of a naphtha-launch, he was entertaining

himself during the performance of some after-school jobs, when his voice first came under the notice of Florence Faraday, the next-door neighbor.

Florence was a young girl, enthusiastic to better the universe. When, some months before, her mother had made her give up settlement work, declaring that it was too much for her, the girl's energies had merely been diverted into such channels as the teaching of a Sunday-school class and the acquiring of recruits for the vested choir of her beloved Episcopal church. Mr. Murford, the choirmaster, had, in former more frivolous years, given some lessons to Florence; now he and his ex-pupil were the best of friends, with the common interest of the choir, and she delighted to ravage the slums to find him high voices and accurate ears. There had been many failures, vocal and moral, when suddenly, under the very window of Florence's charming den—for the big house democratically jostled the little one—there piped up Billy's exquisite notes.

The telephone was overworked that afternoon, but at last Mr. Murford was wrought to a sufficient pitch of excitement, and made an appointment to call with Florence upon the Milligans, and investigate the new "find." The day and moment came; Mrs. Milligan was seen and importuned to let her son be a choir-boy. She was smilingly dubious in the matter.

"Billy sing?" she repeated. "Why, I never thought his voice was anything special. I git kinder sick of his noise,

he keeps it up so constant. I'm afraid you won't like it so good when you hear it close-t up—but I'll call him, and see what you think and what he says."

After some delay, the candidate was produced, very wet as to hair and stiff as to collar. Interviewed, he rubbed his soft chin on the lapel of his Sunday coat, fingered the fringe of a tidy, and said vaguely that he "didn't know whether he would like singing in a choir or not."

However, Mr. Murford had had much experience with boys, and knew something about managing them. Turning away the keen black eyes that had embarrassed Billy, he opened the parlor organ and began to play. The boy was at his elbow in a moment, and was soon led on to run the scales that Mr. Murford indicated to him, and then to sing "The Gates of the City," a sacred song very popular just then as an offertory selection, which Billy had somewhere picked up for his own repertoire.

A cheap reed-organ is not the most sympathetic of instruments, even under knowing hands. Besides, Billy had apparently left behind in the outer air his roundest, freshest notes; and little, jolly improvisations that suited them best. Yet the trial was, after all, a moderate success. Mr. Murford agreed to take the boy as a private pupil, at Florence's expense, for a term of months; for choir rehearsal alone would not suffice to give so untrained a singer the perfection required in the services of St. Andrew's. Meanwhile, Billy should be earning his initial twenty-five cents a week in the choir, with the promise of steady advancement and increase of pay if he should do well.

"A quarter a week! It ain't no git-rich-quick scheme, I see," said Billy solemnly.

"Billy, Billy, that's sassy!" reproved his mother. "It's very good in the lady and gentleman to want to pay you at all, jest for your hollerin'."

But Florence smiled sweetly on the twelve-year-old above her rich furs, and, won by that smile and the frost-bloom on her cheeks, Billy wriggled

over to her side, and was her champion from that minute.

"I kin do something that knocks the spots off'n them things I've been singin'," he confided. "I kin make a noise like a cop's whistle. I kin make it sound like it ain't me doin' it, too; like that 'triloquy feller at the Bijou last winter. Wanter hear me?"

On being assured that she did want to, Billy shrilled a minor note which was applauded as a most faithful reproduction of the police signal. Then, arrangements having been concluded for the boy's first lesson and rehearsal, the callers took their leave.

Now began busy days for Billy, in spite of the fact that he was removed temporarily from school. He had two lessons a week from Mr. Murford, an hour's practise daily, split into ten-minute periods in consideration of his tender years, and rehearsals without number. The youngster refused indignantly to work "overtime," until he heard that he should be paid extra for special services. Thereupon he began, like other choir-boys, to tolerate Saints' Days, and to yearn for elaborate weddings.

"Why are you so mercenary, Billy? What makes you so eager to earn money?" Florence asked.

"Gee! I wanter plunge a little an' buy a 'bubble. I kin git a 'slightly used' one cheap. Goes like this," and—such was the intimacy now existing between the two—Billy permitted himself a subdued but wholly convincing "Honk, honk!"

Remonstrated with for his extravagant designs, Billy amended them to, "Or maybe I'll save up till I kin buy a share in some little biz, ag'inst the time I'm a man."

In these days, the singing under Florence's window was mainly sacred in character. Kindlings were chopped in time to a stately processional; the wringer was turned to a complicated system of Alleluias. Finding that the boy was an arrant little heathen concerning the more devotional parts of the service, even though he grasped the choral parts singularly well, Florence

took him into her Sunday-school class glowing with the praiseworthy intention of teaching him reverence. At her bidding he bent himself for the Creed, and prostrated himself for the Collect; but when Florence heard him tell another boy that "Ju-jut-su was easy to" these changes of attitude, she felt that her road lay up-hill.

At first, reports from Mr. Murford were encouraging. Billy was learning rapidly, and was being coached to take the place of Raymond Wood, hitherto the prize boy soprano, but now outgrowing his usefulness. This news was highly gratifying, but Florence had no sooner begun to be happy on her protégé's account, when there came a douche of cold water—and, naturally, it was she that caught the shower-bath. Billy, it seemed, had been absent from two lessons and several choir rehearsals at the very time when it was most important that he should be regular, now that the Easter music was in preparation. It appeared that Billy had no scruples whatever about dashing out of chancel or choir-room with his usual yelp of, "Come on, fellers!" if a band went by, to follow in the train of those men with beautiful big silver horns wreathed around their necks, and drums rat-tatting. It was only too true that he felt no hesitancy about "licking" in the face of the choir and the choirmaster, any fellow singer so indiscreet as to whisper "Teacher's pet!" in his ear. (This taunt was a veiled allusion to his position in Florence's class.) All these delinquencies were set down in a note from Mr. Murford. Expulsion of the little rascal just as this time was, he said, inadvisable, for, artistically, the boy was a success. Would Florence see the transgressor, talk to him, and, if possible, prevail over his unregenerate nature?

Florence read the note carefully, put on her charming hat and coat, and was leaving the front door to seek and lecture Billy, when the boy himself, looking sullen and red-eyed, as if perhaps emerging from a maternal collision, dived out of his own little house. She beckoned to him and coaxed him up-

stairs to her den, his unwilling feet thudding on the thick carpet behind her.

"Now, Billy, what is it you don't like? Is it the music-lessons, or the choir?"

"Miss Florence, it's everything!" burst out the young misanthrope. "Murford—Mr. Murford—makes me sing so many o' them little crazy, tomfool screeches—'E-e-e-e-yah!' an' 'La-a-a-a-yah!—that all the boys in the block has taken to comin' under the window to guy me—I've fit six this week a'ready, an' it ain't but Thursday. I don't know what *will* happen when I begin on them Ahmens! But that ain't the worst. I ain't stuck on settin' up there on the grand stand, dressed like a girl in them scatters an' scotters—"

"Cassocks and cottas, Billy. You can talk plainly enough when you choose." Florence could be a trifle severe when matters of ritual were discussed.

"Yas'm. Cassock. Cotta. Well, I ain't stuck on 'em, as I say, but *that* ain't the worst. You know we're gettin' ready for a reg'lär field day next month—Easter Sunday. Well, Mur—Mr. Murford says he's a-goin' to give me a solo to sing that day; a real, high little piece that he's skeered would split Raymond Wood's voice if he tried it. Now, Miss Florence, I ain't no quitter, as a rule, but when I think o' standin' up there to sing by myself, with all them swell guys lookin' at me, I jist git sick an' say: 'Me fer the street that day!' It's a real hard piece, too; an' Murford has been so strick, an' has made me go over it so often, that he has kinder worked the life outer my voice an' made it sound like wheels er sumpin'."

This was, probably, exactly true. Florence had sometimes noticed in the choirmaster a tendency to overtrain an attractive but immature voice. She made a mental note of the boy's comment, determining to give his teacher a hint. Meanwhile, since discipline must be upheld, she dealt with Billy by the questionable means of strategy.

"Billy, you say you're not a quitter? Nor a coward? No?"

"Who? Me? Nev-er!"

"You think you could sing the solo some kind of way, if you really tried?"

"I guess so."

"Billy, would you take a dare?"

"Not on your ping-pong!"

"Then, Billy, I *dare* you to sing that solo!"

Billy saw the point. The last trace of sullenness vanished from his pleasant, freckled little face, and in its place appeared a broad, generous, boyish grin.

"I guiss you've got me there, Miss Florence," he said. "I guiss I'll have to try, but don't you blame me if I 'fall down.'"

"One thing more, Billy. Why is it that you irritate Mr. Murford and distract the choir by fighting or threatening a silly boy, who seems able to tease you by calling you 'Teacher's pet'?"

"Gee! I don't mind his pickin' on me about goin' to Sunday-school to you. I don't mind his kiddin' jist because it *is* kiddin'," said Billy, with fine scorn. "But he ain't got no call to drag your name into the scrap, an' that's w'at I want to learn him good an' quick!"

Before this knightly spirit Florence sat abased. Larger men than Billy had fought duels for a like cause, and she knew it. She could only thank her freckled champion, and ring for chocolate and cakes.

Over these and a lapful of foreign photographs a happy half-hour was spent. Billy, growing confidential over his fifth cake, explained why he had been absent from two music-lessons.

"I wasn't in no fight, ner follerin' no band, them two times. I was watchin' Old Sal, the scaly old tough! Miss Florence, you know all these here burglar scares that's been in the papers lately?"

"Yes," said Florence, looking with a little apprehensive shiver at the rings and bracelets which she had a way of taking off if they irked her, and throwing down anywhere, on desk or table.

"Well, they's five hundred dollars offered fer informash' concernin' the gang that broke into Spiegler Brothers'

store last week. (Gee, I wisht I had that mon'!) I don't know w'ether I'm on the right track or not, but I sure do s'picion that old w'isky-bottle, Sal. Me an' another boy was walkin' along behind her one day not so long ago, and she 'uz talkin' to herself: 'Rich folks got too much, ought to give poor folks half!' She 'uz sayin' jist that. Do you know her, Miss Florence?"

"She comes here now and then, and the maids give her something warm in the kitchen. Poor old thing! I've always thought that if she'd had more hot coffee and hot food she would keep away from saloons," said Florence dreamily.

"Yas'm, an' so does other ladies think so, an' how does the old snake pay yer back? Noses around inside your kitchens an' lunch-rooms after you've done eatin' an' wile the servants is washin' dishes, an' gives informash' to a gang of burglars how much real silver yer got, an' how much plated! An' gits her pay in w'isky. Yas, *ma'am!* Take yer tip from me, Miss Florence, an' don't yer let that old slob come inside yer door ag'in."

Florence, marveling at the shrewdness and "informash'" of the modern child of the city streets, promised, and straightway forgot the warning.

After this things went better with Billy's lessons and rehearsals. Both were attended regularly, and the solo, with much repetition, became easy. On the morning of Easter Sunday, Florence drove to church with a happy heart. Usually she gave her coachman a holiday on Sunday, but this morning Mike had been to mass at five o'clock, and declared himself ready to serve her now; the man was overflowing with obligingness, and perhaps with a sly pride in seeing his own shining brougham and horses in the Easter church parade. It was a perfect day, and Florence, herself a silken princess out of a fairy-book, wondered how Billy would look in his new suit. For Billy, you must know, was to appear to her, before putting on the choral vestments he loathed, in Norfolk jacket and bloomer trousers, lately placarded, "Nobby for Little

Gents," in Isaacstein's window. For had not Florence herself given Mrs. Milligan the nine dollars and ninety-eight cents to purchase these splendors?

A less agreeable thought came with the sight of a besotted beggar woman hunched outside of a fashionable hotel, working on the holiday sympathies of passers-by. Florence remembered Old Sal; the woman had been at the Faradays' again, and had been admitted by Mary, a good-natured maid. "I must tell Mary to be just a little bit careful," Florence mused.

Then she reached the church, but here disaster awaited her. A messenger, watching at the curbstone, said that Mr. Murford wished to see her, and haled her to his presence. The choirmaster, standing at the transept door, his black eyes ominously steady, uttered these appalling words:

"Billy has absconded."

"Oh, Mr. Murford! When? Where?"

"You would better ask 'Why'? The boys adduce stage fright as the cause. He shied at that solo from the first—I wish to goodness now that I hadn't insisted upon his singing it. At any rate, he was in the robing-room half an hour ago, vested for the chancel; I had my back turned, but the boys say that he suddenly uttered an exclamation and rushed into the street, dressed just as he was, and he has returned no more. And there goes the processionnal!" as a bass rumble began to fill the church. The overstrained choirmaster almost tore his hair.

"Just one moment before you go. What are you going to do about it?" pleaded Florence.

"Do?" snapped the choirmaster. "Suspend Master William Milligan from the choir of St. Andrew's. Even if my patience were limitless, there's the example to the other boys to be thought of. But nothing can make up for this final offense. Fool—fool that I was for taking any risks with the combination of that scamp and the Easter program!"

The fine service of that morning was

torture to Florence Faraday. The procession, without Billy, was incomplete enough, in her eyes, but the hastily substituted solo by Raymond Wood was excruciating. Raymond was a prim, unimpeachable choir-boy—in fact, a "sissy"; and where Billy's bird-notes would have risen, clear and free, Raymond's hesitated, and, as Billy said, "split." Stout, prosperous Mr. Faraday, appearing later in the end of his pew, noticing his daughter's compressed lips, asked if the fragrance of the flowers banked along the altar-rail overpowered her. Florence shook her head, while she determined not to "tell on" Billy—then or ever, if she could help.

When at last she was free to go home, she telephoned to a willing assistant to take charge of her Sunday-school mission class at the Easter festival that afternoon. Florence herself felt unable to attend it. A crumb of comfort came with a note of apology from Mr. Murford, brought by messenger:

Sorry I spoke so crossly, but had provocation. Find Billy, and if he hasn't done anything too dreadful, I'll reinstate him. Perhaps he was frightened, poor little blokie!

However, this crumb failed to sustain her long. A miserable, discouraged Sunday afternoon ensued. To the dejection of a disappointed philanthropist, was joined the strange yearning of a grown woman over a young, unworthy, lawless boy creature, that had somehow snuggled into a corner of her maternal heart. That Billy should have proved a craven, after all! Perhaps she had been wrong in trying to cage the bird and have its voice drilled in the exacting ways of written music. Some things are by nature untamable, and perhaps Billy, who could sing anything on earth that he was not taught to sing, was one of these. Yet she had hoped that he would at least make the attempt that Easter day, for her sake.

Florence paid a little call on Mrs. Milligan during the afternoon, and sat for awhile lamenting and condoling with the mother, who was by turns frightened and indignant, the while

Billy's Easter dinner frizzled to a crisp in the little oven.

Then the girl went back to her room and sat there for two more disconsolate hours. But at twilight there came a whir at the door-bell that made Florence's heart leap, though she could not have reasoned why there was promise in the sound. She flew to the banister. Down in the vestibule a dubious voice, that of the butler, a new man, was parleying with a stout, childish voice outside.

"Jist you go up an' ast her," reiterated the young voice. "She'll see me; bet your life she will."

Florence fairly fell down the stairs.

"Oh, Billy! Oh, Billy!"

The butler retired in bewilderment, and some disapproval.

"It's me, all right, Miss Florence; but did you ever see sich a sight in yer life?"

Candidly, Florence never had. His festival cotta was under his arm, rolled into a ball, soiled and torn; his cassock was splashed with mud; one eye was black and the other smeary.

"I guiss you'll have to let me set down, I'm that beat out."

Enсонced in a great leather chair, with Florence opposite, he proceeded:

"I know you'll think I'm a born tough when I tell you that I run out'n the choich, in the first place, to fight a boy. It was the old trouble, Miss Florence. A boy w'at's in your Sunday class, though not in the choir, come to the door of our dressin'-room and made a face—like 'iss"—Billy illustrated—"and says he: 'Teacher's pet!' I had promised you I wouldn't fight no more about that, but my blood got up, an' I couldn't stand fer it. First I knowed, I's on the street runnin' after him, lickety-split. And you know I must 'a' wanted him pretty bad, Miss Florence, when I'd go on the street in my scatter an' scoter."

"Never mind, Billy. And what happened next?"

"So he dodged up a little alley, an' I chased him, an' we run spang into a little house, jist a shanty, that stood

there with the door open. An' who do you s'pose was in it?"

"I can't imagine." Florence was breathless.

"It was Old Sal, as sure as I'm alive! An' with her was men—four men. She was tellin' 'em sumpin', but when she seen me she stopped it, an' giv' a awful screech instead. So one o' the men says: 'Ketch them two little devils, they'll hear too much!' But Sal can't take her eyes off'n me, an' she says: 'This here's no devil, he's an altar-boy—there's priests about!' An', cross my heart, Miss Florence, she got down on her knees an' begun to tell prayers on the buttons of her old coat, 'cause she ain't got any beads handy! Fer the first time in my life," said Billy, with the tolerance of age and experience, "I was kinder sorry fer her."

"Go on, Billy," gasped Florence.

"So one o' them men says: 'Shet yer head, Sal—you're drunk!' But she says: 'I won't shet it, an' you won't make me, fer I'm the only one that kin tell you how to git into Mr. Faraday's house to-night!' before he could stop her. So then, while they were cursin' at her, the boy made a sneak for the door——"

"Why, Billy! Did she really say that? We must inform the police at once!" Florence started up in alarm, moving toward her telephone.

"Don't you be skeered, Miss Florence. The cops know it," said Billy calmly. "I went to the Fif' Precink Station soon as I could git away, an' one cop there thought I's slightly bug, 'specially as I was in my scatter—I'd took the scoter off by then. But another cop said: 'These street boys knows a lot, Rafferty—it won't hurt us to go look into the shanty.' So I went to show 'em the way—had a bully ride in the patrol-wagon, w'ich was good, as I'd used me last nickel fer car fare. An' they raided the shanty, an' 'rested everybody there, for there they was, on account of Old Sal's being in a bad way, an' said they'd swear out warrants w'en they had more time. Bully!" said the boy, rubbing his hands in glee.

"But in the morning, Billy, when you

first ran into the little house, why didn't you come away sooner?"

"Why, how could I, Miss Florence, when I was kidnaped? The boy that I was chasin' did git away, but I was all mixed up in skirts, an' a man had me under his arm, an' both doors bolted in no time. I fit hard, but Sal wouldn't let 'em hurt me, 'cause she thought I'd got sumpin' to do with a priest, an', after the first scrap, they all treated me pretty white. They offered me lots to eat an' drink, but I's skeered they'd doped it, and fed most of it to their bulldog under the table.

"I thought about the choich, an' my solo, an' you; an' man! I was achin' to git away! At last, when they was all pretty full, I thought of a way. I im'tated a plice whistle, like it come from outside—one o' my best stunts, you know, Miss Florence—an' yells out: '*There's the cops a-comin'!*' An' in the excitement, I unbolted the door just a crack, an' flew. An' as they's the same gang that broke into Spiegler's, I'm a-goin' to-morrer to claim my five hundred plunks—if you'll go 'long with me."

"To identify you, dear? Of course I will, though we may have to take one of those policemen with us, too, to swear what you have done. You have acted like a little adventurer, and saved my father's property and mine, and I hope you will get the reward. But what will you do with all that money, my child? Surely you were joking about buying a motor-car or a business enterprise? Let me put some more

money with yours, and have you nicely educated—maybe in music—"

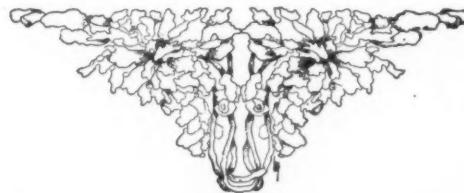
"Huh!" said Billy, rather shortly. "I thought I'd git into a easier biz than singin'!" Then, seeing that his patron saint, Florence, was hurt, he did the most childish-looking thing that Florence had ever seen him do—and yet Billy was not in a childish mood. Hitching across the hall in his binding cassock, he buried his face in her lap.

"No, no, I was jist a-foolin' l!" he cried. "I wouldn't go back on Murford, ne'r you, ner the choir, fer the wold! I'll sing me solo to-night, after I've had a wash and a snack, if somebody'll lend me some cleaner duds'n these." And, in fact, that evening he kept his promise, and never sang with more seraphic tones.

"Billy," said Florence pathetically, "think twice before you promise me to keep on with your music. It is, as you say, a hard 'biz.'"

"Gee!" said the boy, with the hoarse voice and lingo of the underworld of which he had been a part on that day, but with compensation to Florence in the sincerity of his accent, "I'm good fer a try, at least, jist to please you, Miss Florence. I ain't stuck on de bloomin' music, but I am on *you!*"

For the first time in his adventurous career, little Billy had met with the force of chivalry, which is able to tame wilder things than boys and bobolinks. Where authority and art had been set at naught, he yielded himself, a willing knight, in the service of his incomparable lady.



Editorial Note

The serial story by Horace Annesley Vachell, the first instalment of which begins on the opposite page, is one which the publishers of AINSLEE'S believe will be the most sensational event in the magazine world in 1907.

More than a year ago attempts were made to secure the rights of his new novel which was to follow that striking book "*The Face of Clay*." At that time, Mr. Vachell was one of the first fifteen authors of England, estimating by the sales of his previous books. Before copy was delivered he had risen to a place among the first ten, and to-day he is one of the first five.

Competent judges here and in England who have read "*Her Son*," believe that its equal has not been produced during the last twenty years. There is no doubt that this new story will be the most talked-of book in Great Britain when it is published in 1907. It is bound to arouse discussion.

In conception this story is one of extraordinary originality and at the same time consummately perfect in construction. There are some wonderful situations all through it, inevitably logical developments of both plot and characters, situations that will produce the most profound impressions upon the reader, not only because of their dramatic power but also because of the moral elevation and purity of Dorothy's character and the forcefulness of Gasgoyne. In human interest it surpasses any of the fiction of the present generation, and in literary craftsmanship it places the author on a level with Mrs. Humphry Ward, Edith Wharton, and Robert Hichens.



CHAPTER I.

AFTER she had parted from Gasgoyne, Dorothy Fairfax walked back to her tiny house in Oakley Street, reaching Albert Bridge just two minutes after leaving Battersea Park. Half-way across she paused, looking back, smiling and faintly blushing, because she could see the trees beneath whose discreet shade her lover had kissed her with a parting injunction to scurry home before the rain fell. Overhead, a black, thunderous cloud obscured the radiance of a July afternoon; and the air, like the water in the river, seemed to flow sluggishly and in eddies, as if driven by opposing forces. Dorothy noticed that the tide had begun to ebb, and this stirred in her for the thousandth time a vague pleasant melancholy, and the sense of the rhythm of things—the systole and diastole of nature's heart. Her reflections were scattered by a tremendous clap of thunder, which shook the bridge. The foot-passengers quickened their pace, glancing up with eyes dazed by the glare of the lightning. It was certain that in a moment the rain would come down with tropical violence. Dorothy lifted a well-hung skirt, and began to run. More than one woman watched her with envy, more than one man with surprise and delight, as she sped swift-

ly and smoothly on, running with the ease and grace of Atalanta. Not that she was a beauty. Her features were irregular, challenging interest rather than admiration. But her air of sanity and health—the bright hair, the fine skin, the clear eyes—appealed irresistibly. Below this charming surface and slightly obscured by it lay a certain authority and decisiveness not in the least aggressive or masculine, but distinctly feminine and modern—the look of the capable woman who knows that a definite place in the world has been assigned to her.

"Oh, you nymph!" muttered an actor, meeting her vivid glance as she flashed by him.

She caught the murmur, and smiled. Huge drops of rain were pattering down upon a beautiful new hat. Through her thin linen dress she could feel the lashing shower. Truly she was a nymph flying from a force which already had overtaken her. Inevitably, so she reflected, she would be drenched through and through before she reached the Middlesex shore. Realizing this, she stopped running, and allowed herself to be entertained by the spectacle about her. More than half the people on the bridge were panic-stricken by the lightning. A second clap, even louder than the first, provoked a howl of terror from a stout young woman who was carrying a baby on one arm and dragging a child of five by the other. Both baby and child, seized with the contagion of fear,

howled also. The bridge rocked, groaning and travailing, like a creature in mortal anguish.

"Dear, dear!" sobbed the young woman. "Ain't this awful?"

The question, addressed to none in particular, was flung to the wind, which whirled it on to Dorothy, together with a tall hat belonging to an elderly gentleman. Dorothy stopped both. As the elderly gentleman retrieved his hat with mumbled thanks, Dorothy answered the young woman's question.

"It is not awful," she said with authority. "The storm is at least half a mile away. Let me carry that baby—you are positively dead beat."

With a firm hand she took the baby from the astonished mother and soothed it. The rain streamed down so thickly that neither bank of the river was visible from the center of the long bridge.

"We may as well take it easy," said Dorothy. "I'm soaking, and so are you."

The stout young woman glanced at her purple plush dress, and then at Dorothy's pink linen frock.

"I nearly killed myself a-runnin'," she gasped. "But it's done for. Four and tenpence a yard, too! Keep up, car'n't yer?" She jerked the child's arm. "An', look 'ere, if yer stop y'r noise and be'ave yerself, I'll see that the thunder an' lightnin' don't strike yer dead."

The child stopped sobbing. Dorothy laughed, but not unsympathetically. Then, noting the misery with which her companion regarded the purple plush garment, she added softly: "My hat cost me two guineas; and I can't afford another this summer. We must grin and bear it."

"I never was one o' the grinnin' ones," retorted the stout young woman; "and I can an' do say: 'God's will be done;' but the rain might have held off till I'd got into a bus. My! there is goes agine."

This, however, was the last clap. The storm passed on down the river,

leaving a delightful fragrance and freshness behind it. The sun blazed out, transmuting all things from lead to gold—the barges on the Surrey side looked as if newly painted and varnished—the houses along the Chelsea embankment suffused a sort of rosy radiance.

"Yer've been very kind, ma'am," said the stout young woman, as she took the baby from Dorothy's arms, "and it's queer how biby took to yer, seein' as she allus is so perticler with stryangers. I dare say yer've one or two of yer own?"

"No," said Dorothy, with a slight blush. "I'm unmarried."

"I beg pardon, miss, I'm sure, but I did tyke yer fer a merried lidy. An' the w'y yer handled the kid—"

"I am very fond of children," said Dorothy. "Good-by."

They parted at the end of the bridge. Dorothy walked down Oakley Street till she came to her own house. She unlocked the front door with a latchkey, smiling with satisfaction, because it was so delightful to find herself at home. Within five minutes she had slipped out of her wet things and into a dry frock, in the bosom of which she fastened a fine rose—one of a bunch which Gasgoyne had sent that morning with a note saying that he would be in Battersea Park at four.

She sank into an easy chair, giving herself up to the thought of her lover, evoking his image, hearing his deep voice, which had thrilled her from the first moment they had met. Always Dorothy had known that such a man would come into her life, and that when he came she would recognize him instantly with no absurd, semi-savage flutterings and doubtings, but sanely, joyously, triumphantly.

Long ago, her father and teacher, the famous doctor, had predicted what would come to pass. She could hear his kindly voice, with its attractive, penetrating intonations, saying: "My dear Doll, your mate is looking for you, and I'm training you to know him when you meet him."

The training, according to her moth-

er's relations—the Helminghams, of East Anglia—had been thorough, perhaps, but peculiar. George Fairfax had taught his daughter much of what he knew concerning the human body, and nearly all that he surmised concerning the human mind. The Helminghams were too well-bred to indict George Fairfax's methods, but they told East Anglia that things would have been very different if Dorothy's mother had survived Dorothy's birth.

Lying back in her chair, sensible of the peace and freshness which succeed a storm, Dorothy reflected for the thousand and first time that her father would have approved of Dick Gascoyne as a son-in-law.

"Wouldn't he, Solomon?"

Solomon, the Yorkshire tyke—so-named because he was the most intelligent person in dogdom—assented with enthusiasm. Solomon had not accompanied his mistress to Battersea Park, because he knew, none better, the humiliation of playing gooseberry, but being, as has been said, superhumanly intelligent, he quite understood that Dick Gascoyne was as necessary to Dorothy's happiness as he was himself.

Had you asked Solomon for an opinion, he would have told you that in Dorothy met, and were fused, two extremes: the modern and the primitive maiden, an admirable combination of complex and simple. The Arcadian type, too often exasperatingly stupid, and yet so delightfully serene, had been reproduced with a mentality essentially urban. Nevertheless, first and last, she represented all that wifehood and motherhood may include.

She herself was conscious of this. Indeed, till the moment of his death (which had come with appalling suddenness), Dorothy's future as wife and mother had been a subject of never-failing interest between father and daughter. George Fairfax spoke of love candidly, and yet with absolute delicacy as an all-compelling force, which, directed aright, must work for good. Of the evil of such a power abused, he had intended to speak also when Dorothy became older, but he

died before time gave him the opportunity.

After his death she went to live with the Helminghams, her mother's people. George Fairfax left behind him a great reputation, but a small fortune—sufficient to bring in some five or six hundred a year to Dorothy. He might have saved a plum, at least, but he had never learned to say "No" to the pitiful appeals of poverty and pain.

Sir Augustus Helmingham, M. P., J. P., and a baronet of James the First's creation, had almost everything which this world can give except a sense of humor. This was not missed either in East Anglia or in Portman Square, but it made an enormous difference to Dorothy. Ultimately, it drove her to Oakley Street. She could never forget her uncle's first words after her father's death, spoken in that father's consulting-room, beneath the very chamber where he was lying dead. Sir Augustus, let it be said, had come to town in almost undignified haste; he sincerely wished to do the really right thing; he was grieved; he felt paternal; but he made a sad mess of it.

"My dear child"—Dorothy was sobbing in his arms—"I can put myself in your place. I know exactly how you feel"—Sir Augustus had used this serviceable phrase to mothers bereaved of children, and even to children who had lost beloved dolls—"but you must dry your eyes and endeavor to turn this affliction to your spiritual profit."

And then Dorothy had laughed.

Sir Augustus dismissed the laugh with the charitable explanation: hysteria—but it rang shockingly in his ears—it indicated want of balance. He met the emergency with practical common sense.

"I prescribe a glass of port wine at once."

And again Dorothy had laughed!

The next two years were spent in East Anglia and Portman Square. Dorothy never failed to speak warmly of the kindness shown to her by both uncle and aunt, but she knew from the first that she was a stranger within their gates—alien not to their affection,

but, what is nearly as hard to bear, their inherited customs and traditions. There was a place prepared, a very large and comfortable place, delightfully furnished, guaranteed to suit the average young gentlewoman, but, unhappily, a misfit for Dorothy.

"We don't quite understand you," murmured Lady Helmingham.

"You make me feel a beast," said Dorothy ruefully, "because I do understand you, Aunt Charlotte, and it doesn't seem fair that you shouldn't understand me. I'm a sort of Wonderful Puzzle Fifteen to you, I know."

"You are, my dear," the lady sighed; "and I suppose that's the end of it."

"I fear it's just the beginning. Uncle Augustus and you must let me dree my ain weird. I think I should like to become a hospital nurse."

"Dorothy!"

"If there were *vivandières* in our army—"

"My child, pray don't joke about such serious matters."

"I am not joking, Aunt Charlotte. It is your duty to reflect what a shocking example I am to your Amy."

"Really, Dorothy—"

"Really and truly. Amy understudies me already. In fact, thinking for you, for Amy, and for myself, I have summed up the situation in one word—budge!"

"Budge?"

"Do a bunk, as the boys put it."

"If you would be less—er—flipant—"

Dorothy took her aunt's hand; then, bending down, she kissed the protesting, querulous, kindly face.

"I am sorry," she whispered. "But why shouldn't I paddle my—I mean, don't you think that, under all the circumstances"—unconsciously there was a very capital imitation of Sir Augustus—"it might be wiser for me to go?"

"To go—where?"

"I have thought of a flat. Solomon and I would be quite happy in a flat."

"In a flat? Twenty-five years ago few spinsters, young or old, dared to live in flats. Solomon and you? Apropos, Dorothy, I wish you had

given your terrier a more suitable name. People draw the most absurd inferences. Only yesterday, dear Lady Winterbotham asked me if Solomon was a confection of ours."

"I hope you said he was your darling nephew."

"I had to explain. As for your living alone in a flat—"

"I am never alone with Solomon."

"Your uncle would say—*impossible!*"

"Surely not that?"

"You, a mere chit of a girl, not yet twenty, with a flat of your own—"

"In, not with. I object to the 'with,' although originally *you* suggested that I should."

"I suggested—what?"

"That I should marry and live with a flat."

"Are you speaking of Lord Ipswich?"

"Certainly. Everybody called him 'It' at Eton and Oxford. Poor 'it!' Before he honored me with his attentions, all of you spoke of him as a flat."

"He is very much in love with you, and has been admirably brought up. He would never give a wife a moment's uneasiness. And some young men—"

Aunt Charlotte resolutely shut her lips, and glanced down her aristocratic nose.

"As for Teddy Ipswich," said Dorothy, with slightly heightened color, "I will use uncle's and your word—impossible!"

No more was said upon this occasion, but the word "budge" became an obsession to Dorothy. Other men were charmed by her pleasant looks and intelligence, but, in the end, each and all were condemned as impossible. Then Dick Gascoyne appeared.

Dick—who had just returned from the Russian-Turkish War—lived in Grub Street, upon the money which he could persuade appreciative editors to give in exchange for his "stuff." Dick appeared in Portman Square with proper credentials. Sir Augustus and Lady Helmingham begged to have the honor of Mr. Richard Gascoyne's company upon the 25th of May. In

a corner of the card was the word *Dancing*. The card was intended for Richard Gasgoyne, of the Coldstream, and it was Lady Helmingham's misfortune, not her fault, that the pasteboard was misdirected (by a secretary paid to look out names and addresses in a directory) to a club instead of Chelsea Barracks.

Richard Gasgoyne the Wrong accepted Richard Gasgoyne the Right's invitation, which is, after all, the marrow of the matter.

He came to Portman Square in a bus, believing himself to be an honored guest, and he was received as such, for Lady Helmingham had never met the Coldstreamer. As Dick mounted the fine flight of stairs, at the head of which stood his bedamoned hostess, he challenged attention by reason of his face and stature. Lady Helmingham blinked when his name fell loudly upon her ear. She has confessed that she was dazzled. And at once she presented Apollo to her niece, Dorothy Fairfax. Dick looked keenly at Dorothy and asked for a dance. Before that dance—and it happened to be the second—was over, Dorothy had been put into possession of the facts. She had heard of the Coldstreamer, and this was not he. Dick, who had Cæsarean attributes, attacked boldly. He was enchanted with Dorothy, and this splendid entertainment had the additional attraction of an adventure. When Lady Helmingham had welcomed him so effusively with a flying allusion to his dear mother, or dear aunt, Dick grasped the situation.

"I'm here under false pretenses," he told Dorothy.

"You are," she admitted, rather gaspingly, for they had danced the valse through without stopping. "I was told you were a shocking performer. I suppose the standard is high in the Guards."

"I'm not in the Guards," said Dick.

"Surely you are Mr. Richard Gasgoyne."

"I am."

"Then—?"

"It will take some time to tell."

"Hardly anybody has come yet. Tell it."

Dick told it, and the story lost nothing in the telling, for already he was a practised teller of tales. Like a true artist, he made the interest of his tale cumulative, and, when he finished, Dorothy was athirst for more.

"Is that all?"

"Nearly all; naturally, I have left out some."

Afterward the careless words came back to Dorothy. He had left out "some." What she knew, however, must be made known to the reader. Dick was the son of a country parson, who had pinched himself sorely to send his boy to Winchester and Oxford. The Gasgoyne in the Coldstream appeared to be a second cousin.

"I've not met him," said Dick, with engaging candor. "They tell me he's a bit of an ass. It's a fact that I've cut my swell relations."

"That is better than their cutting you," said Dorothy.

"Exactly"—he was delighted with her reply. "You see, I wasn't going to sponge on them, and when my father died, I found myself without a rap. I had to leave Oxford and earn my bread and butter."

"I am sure you earned it."

"As to that—well, I'm not one to count 'the billows past,' but I have dined and supped off a ha'penny bun—very satisfying buns. Now, I'm all right."

Details were then forthcoming about his work—the work of a journalist. The minutes flew while Dick talked and Dorothy listened. He asked for and was accorded another dance. Dorothy introduced him to half a dozen girls. You may be sure that the young fellow enjoyed himself vastly well, but he waited with impatience for his second dance with Dorothy. Meantime, Lady Helmingham had discovered that a mistake had been made.

"It seems," she whispered to her niece, "that this very charming-looking young man is not in the Coldstreams."

"He is a cousin," Dorothy replied. "The card went to the wrong address."

"A cousin—ah! It doesn't matter. He seems to be enjoying himself, my dear."

"He is the sort of man who can get satisfaction out of ha'penny buns," Dorothy murmured. The allusion was wasted upon the good aunt, who had other matters to attend to. Dorothy was whisked away by an admirable dancer, but he valed less smoothly than Richard Gascoyne.

When the second dance was over, the mischief had been done. The pair sat out the interval and the following lancers. Dorothy told her story. When Dick learned that she was her father's daughter, his face beamed.

"You must be the right sort," he muttered.

"Thanks."

"But it's rather queer that you should be Lady Helmingham's niece."

"I'm sure she thinks so," laughed Dorothy.

"You have ambitions other than—" he indicated the sparkling crowd.

"Ambitions? Yes."

"If one might venture to ask—"

"But of course you may ask—It is so unintelligent not to ask. I've asked you a score of questions, haven't I? Well, my great ambition at present is to live in a flat?"

"Alone?"

"With Solomon."

"Solomon—?"

"My terrier."

"Oh, your terrier." Dick laughed. "I should like to meet Solomon."

"That goes without saying. I'll ask him if he will let me present you."

"When?"

His face grew very serious; her eyes fell before him.

"And where?"

"This is very flattering to Solomon."

"I am dying to have the honor of his acquaintance. Time and place, please."

She considered, puckering up her brows. Dick adumbrated, so to speak, future greatness by the boldness and ability with which he confronted the first serious obstacle.

"I might drop in to lunch," he suggested.

"To lunch?" Dorothy put up her fan to conceal an amazed smile.

"Why not? I'm sure Lady Helmingham would rise to the occasion, if—"

"If—?"

"If I threw an alluring fly—"

She eyed him with a slightly different expression. He was presenting the enterprising journalist, and Dorothy told herself that he had chosen the right profession. She realized, with a curious conviction, that he was certain to succeed. At any rate, she showed herself willing to indicate the right kind of fly.

"Lady Helmingham is very interested in—bazaars. She will have an art stall at the Albert Hall next week. If you are asked to lunch, I think I can answer for Solomon. He has a most unapostolic intolerance of fools, but he always recognizes and welcomes ability."

Dick got his invitation to luncheon. When the crowds had thinned after supper, the young man approached his hostess, who held out her hand, thinking that he wished to say "good night."

"I'm not going on to the duchess,'" said Dick genially, "partly because I've not been asked, and partly because this is much too charming to leave. I came up to say that when you aimed at a falcon and hit a crow, it was very lucky for the crow."

"If you have had a pleasant evening—"

"I have, I have. By the way, I am told that you are taking a stall at the bazaar to be held in the Albert Hall. You mustn't think that I'm in a hurry to discharge my obligations, but, as I understand that yours is an art stall, perhaps you would let me send you a couple of water-color drawings."

"This is very nice of you, Mr. Gascoyne."

"The only thing"—his tone became deprecating—"is, are they good enough? Perhaps you would let me bring them here to show you. And I know several artists; in so good a cause

I think I might persuade one or two to contribute."

"If you would—my stall, I fear, will be rather bare. You are very kind."

"Not at all. I am really interested in—" he broke off suddenly, and added in a different tone: "Shall I bring you what I can find next Sunday afternoon?"

"If you have no better engagement, won't you come to luncheon? My niece says you were in Plevna."

He hesitated, as if he were mentally glancing at an engagement-book. In reality, he was reflecting, not without a qualm, how easily his guileless fish had been hooked.

"With the greatest pleasure," he replied.

Upon the following Sunday, Dick was introduced to Solomon. Dorothy had told herself that Solomon's instinct was infallible. If he liked Apollo, her own judgment would be fortified. If, as so often happened, Solomon manifested indifference or antipathy to the stranger, why, then, Dorothy's merely feminine predilection would need amendment and modification. Really, it was an ordeal for Gascoyne, because Solomon, as has been said, was so very particular, so hypercritical. But the interview began and ended triumphantly. Gascoyne was acclaimed unmistakably as the right sort.

Within a week Dick and Dorothy were engaged. The word "Caesarean" (already used) describes Dick's methods so adequately that we are justified in skipping details. The young fellow was born under some happy conjunction of Venus and Mars. He carried high places by storm, although, like the illustrious Julius, he never disregarded the necessity of preparation. But when he moved, he moved swiftly—when he struck, he struck hard.

He had the audacity to call upon Sir Augustus and submit, without any groveling, his claims to be received in East Anglia and Portman Square as a nephew-in-law! Sir Augustus listened courteously, and asked for information

concerning settlements—adding civilly: "Perhaps, Mr. Gascoyne, you would prefer to give me the names of your solicitors. Mine are Silkstone and Limpet, of Lincoln's Inn Fields."

"I," said Dick, "am my own solicitor. As for settlements, Sir Augustus, I propose to settle on your niece everything I have."

Half a dozen questions revealed the fact that "everything" stood for a stout, well-muscled body and an active, sanguine mind.

"I am earning about four hundred a year," said Dick; "and my income is steadily increasing. With what Miss Fairfax has we shall do very well; very well indeed."

"I can consent to no engagement between yourself and my niece," replied Sir Augustus frigidly.

Soon after Dick withdrew. Let it be added that he accepted defeat with a gallant smile, not without its effect on the baronet. When the door of the library closed, Sir Augustus—who had hunted in his youth—uttered to himself: "The fellow is a thruster." Then he rang the bell, and said to the butler that he wished to have a few minutes' conversation with Miss Fairfax.

What followed was described by Dorothy in one word: "Ructions."

The young lady refused to give up her lover. Sir Augustus and Lady Helmingham instructed the servants that they were "not at home" to Mr. Richard Gascoyne; and the atmosphere in the big town house became very chilly. For the baronet was one of those benefactors who undo thoughtful and kind actions with thoughtless and unkind words. With how steadier and purer a flame the torch of gratitude would burn were it not so often blown upon by gusty verbosity on the part of those who have lighted it. Sir Augustus would send a poor kinsman a handsome check, or devote much time to secure him a billet, but, having done these good deeds, he would assume henceforward the right to dictate to, to sneer at, and to play the deuce generally with his beneficiary. Indeed, it could be said of him that the persons who

owed him most were the ones who liked him least.

In July, Dorothy took possession of a wee house in Oakley Street, and the announcement of her engagement and forthcoming marriage appeared in the *Morning Post*. Dorothy was now of age, and her own mistress, to use a ridiculously false phrase. She had not many friends, caring little for smart society, but more than one offered her sanctuary, entreated her, indeed, to place herself and her romantic love-affairs in discreet hands. Moira Curragh, an Irish countess, wrote:

DEAR DOLL: An Englishman's house may be his castle (or his dungeon), but an Irish woman's home is a hotel for her friends. Come to me at once, my Juliet.

But Dorothy took her own line amid a chorus of protestation from everybody except Dick. A sub-editorship of a rising daily newspaper had been promised him. The wedding-day had been named. After a brief honeymoon, the pair would return to Oakley Street.

Having passed the Rubicon, Dorothy gave herself up to being rapturously happy. Her own testimony is ample on this point. She invented a word to express her condition. "I *walladge*," she wrote to Lady Curragh, whose home was a hotel for her friends. "*Walladge*," she pointed out, was a combination of "wallow" and "stodge." She had stuffed herself with happiness, and in what she could not consume she swallowed. Happiness is so essentially abstract that any concrete presentation of it must be more or less inaccurate and misleading. But it is necessary to give an impression, at least, of what took place during this memorable month of July. During the day Dorothy ransacked curiosity-shops in search of furniture suitable to what Dick called the Doll's House. The massive mahogany early Victorian chairs and tables and sideboards belonging to George Fairfax had been sold, but his colored prints and engravings, his water-color drawings, his books and china had remained Dorothy's most precious possessions. It was not easy to find things

good enough to form a background to these, but what a delightful quest! Half of each afternoon was spent with Dick, generally upon the river. He had his work, and he was working hard, but he came to Dorothy each day looking as fit and fresh as she did. If she "walladged," so did he. Solomon's nose, it is true, was out of joint, but he carried a stiff tail, and his knee action was universally admired. After all, he had his mornings with Dorothy, and not an article in the Doll's House was bought unless it were highly commended by this canine connoisseur.

When the sun shone radiantly, when, alone in Dick's punt, in some shady backwater of the Thames, the lovers listened to the hum of the bees among the willows, and the soft lapping of the stream as it glided by, Dorothy wondered how long the idyl would last. It seemed amazing that Dick should be so exactly right, so satisfying, and so different from other men whom she had known. One day she said softly:

"Dick, you make love so nicely that one is driven to the conclusion that you've had a lot of practise."

"I have," he replied. "Of course," he hastened to add, "it was make-believe, not the real thing, but I learned a wrinkle or two."

"And you got a wrinkle or two," said Dorothy, eying certain faint lines about his eyes and forehead. Her glance, so steady, so passionate, and so pure, brought the blood to his cheeks. Shamefacedly, he opened his lips to speak, and then, as suddenly, closed them.

"What were you going to say?" she whispered, touching his hair with her fingers. They were sitting side by side at the bottom of a red-cushioned punt. Dick had been reading aloud his latest—and of course his best—short story. He threw the MS. to the end of the punt, and captured her straying fingers, holding them tightly in his.

"Dorothy," he replied gravely, "you have been very generous. I feel as if no man ever knew the girl he loved quite so well as I know you. My God!

what an education this last month has been to me!"

"And to me," she echoed.

"And I"—his voice trembled—"have not been so generous. There are bits—ugly bits—in my life which I may show to you some day, but not now."

"Why not now?"

"I have had a tough time of it, dear"—he felt the sympathetic pressure of her hand in his—"and I have come in contact with pitch: one can't say more to such a girl as you, but it is enough, isn't it? You understand? You are not a prude. And when you touched me that first evening I became clean. You must believe that."

"Yes," she said steadily. "I believe that."

He raised her hand and kissed it, but he did not kiss her lips. Afterward she remembered this, when speech was forced upon both of them.

Upon the day when Dorothy was caught in the storm upon Battersea Bridge, we left her, it will be remembered, in an armchair chewing the cud of sweet reminiscence. Nearly a fortnight had passed since that particular talk between Dick and herself, in which so much that was vital to both of them had been left unsaid. Upon these things left unsaid Dorothy had pondered not a little. She hoped and believed that Dick's youth had not been as the youth of some men she had met. But in any case—and here, of course, she was predicing against the unknowable—in any case, he loved her and she loved him, and they were young and strong, and able to surmount obstacles. The present was theirs and the future. Was it not fatuous to speculate at haphazard concerning the past? She put the question to Solomon, who was lying upon the carpet in front of her, staring at her with his keen, shrewd eyes.

"You have never cried over spilt milk, Solomon."

Solomon got up, stretched himself, yawned—his manners were not always those of Louis XIV.—and said "Wouf-f-f," very contemptuously.

"If I broke the ten commandments

over and over again, you would love me just as much, wouldn't you?"

Solomon wagged his tail and winked. He was not a good tyke, and never pretended to be. Had he not tried to murder Amy Helmingham's pug because Dorothy had taken that spoiled darling for a walk? Was he not a confirmed poacher, a harrier of respectable cats, a thief even?

"But spilt milk leaves a horrid stain, Solomon. You know it does."

Solomon deliberately turned his back, lay down, and put his nose between his paws. He was pretending to go to sleep, because this sort of conversation bored him.

Dorothy felt herself to be rebuked, but Dick's past seemed to beckon to her out of Dick's eyes. She stared at his photograph which stood upon the mantelpiece. Once she had vowed that she would never marry a dark man. Gasgoyne was very dark. He had that white, clear skin so seldom seen in England, and black hair, brows, and lashes. Had his eyes been dark, he would, unquestionably, have looked foreign, too Italian, but his eyes were a Saxon blue, and his features were also Saxon, firmly molded and square.

Afterward, she sometimes wondered whether Gasgoyne's past would have come to her as it did, had she not, so to speak, put herself into rapport with it by constant thought concerning it. For she had come to this conclusion: she wished to know. We are going a little too fast, but it is, perhaps, expedient to admit now that without this previous preparation of the soil, the seed might never have taken root. Falling upon a hard, smooth surface of innocence or ignorance or indifference, a gust of natural indignation would have blown it away.

As Dorothy stared at the portrait, her maid entered. Susan Judkins had been an old and valued servant of George Fairfax, and Dorothy's nurse. In Oakley Street she acted as maid and parlor maid.

"Well, Susan?"

"A young person to see you, Miss Dorothy."

"From the dressmaker?" Young persons from dressmakers and milliners were frequent visitors at the Doll's House during this month of July.

Susan—everybody else called her Mrs. Judkins—shut the door with an air of mystery, and, approaching close to Dorothy, lowered her head and voice.

"She don't look as if she came from any respectable place. Her name is—Miss Crystal Wride."

"I wonder what she wants. Is she young?"

"Quite old enough to know better, I should say."

"Pretty?"

Susan Judkins sniffed, but she was honest.

"Men would call her that," she admitted.

"Show her in!"

Susan sniffed again, but obeyed, knowing that it was useless to combat her mistress' whims. Miss Crystal Wride entered, staring defiantly first at Susan and then at Dorothy. With her came an odor of cheap scent and damp clothes.

At the same moment, Solomon, bristling with rage, began to growl. Then, as the girl advanced, he flew straight at her, and laid hold of her skirt. It was quite plain that he did not think this young woman a suitable person to visit his beloved mistress.

"Let go, you little devil!"

"Solomon! How dare you! Lie down at once, do you hear?"

Solomon obeyed, still growling. But during the interview that followed, his eyes never left Miss Wride's face.

"Has he torn your dress?" Dorothy asked.

"No."

"I am so very sorry. Won't you sit down and tell me what I can do for you?"

"I'll stand, thank you."

Susan Judkins withdrew, very reluctantly. We say more for her character than could be condensed into a couple of pages when we add that she did not tarry a moment outside the door, but hurried at once to her own room.

Miss Wride pulled a frayed pocket-

book out of a pocket, and took from it a newspaper clipping; the announcement, in fact, of Dorothy's approaching marriage.

"This is true, I suppose?"

"Yes."

At this moment Dorothy divined that Gasgoyne's past had come in person to satisfy her curiosity. She had wished to know, and the gods had decreed that she should know. Her face changed subtly as she took note of the stranger, her hat, much bedraggled, her soiled gray kid gloves, her boots.

"I ain't up to much, am I?" Crystal Wride asked, with a sudden derisive smile, "but I was good enough for him—till he met you."

She pointed at Gasgoyne's photograph, enthroned securely in the place of honor upon the mantelpiece.

"You had better sit down," faltered Dorothy.

"Not if it were never so," the girl returned savagely.

Certainly she was more than pretty. Indeed, beautiful, with a lithe grace which in repose—and she was standing perfectly still—suggested a Tanguera statuette. The resemblance was the more striking because her wet skirt clung closely to her figure, accentuating the admirable lines of it.

Dorothy may have thought of these things afterward, for the moment she was sensible of only one overmastering emotion, that of fear. The animal in this girl was about to spring upon her, and she was defenseless. The animal which could never have glided by Lady Helmingham's powdered footmen. An insane desire seized her to scream, to rush from the room, to hide herself. But the animal could move faster, speak louder, than she.

"Why have you come here?"

"To look at you."

At the insolence of the words and the glance which accompanied them Dorothy regained her self-control, and with it her keenness of perception and apprehension. In a different voice she said quietly:

"Then please look at me, and go."

"Ain't you frightened? I'm stronger

than you. I could scratch your eyes out."

She came nearer, her fingers curving, her magnificent eyes flashing. Dorothy rose, slightly trembling. It was her first experience of life as it is lived in wild places, by wild people. Instinctively she realized this, and faced the situation.

"Who are you?" she asked decisively.

It is said that a very simple question will serve to divert the attention of a madman. The girl menacing Dorothy with eyes and gestures was not mad, but she stood close to madness, upon the crumbling edge of it.

"Song and dance, at the Levity Music Hall. Song's goin' to be cut out. Why? Ask Mr. Gasgoyne, or my landlady, in Vauxhall Bridge Road."

Dorothy filled in details, swiftly. Then, quite suddenly, for the words seemed to burst from her without volition on her part, she whispered with unmistakable sincerity:

"Oh! what misery you have suffered."

The sympathy in her voice pierced a crust of rage, jealousy, and despair.

"Don't!" the girl exclaimed huskily, putting up her hands, as if to shut off the sympathy and sorrow. Suddenly, she collapsed, and, falling back on the chair on which she had been asked to sit not a minute before, began to sob, with a violence that appalled Dorothy, who knew not what to do or say in an emergency so poignant and unexpected, conscious herself of misery impending above her own head, feeling, for the first time in her life, that she was whirling far from familiar beacons, at the mercy of tremendous and inexorable forces.

Presently the sobs became less violent, dwindling away into moans. Dorothy divined that the passion which might have left hideous marks upon her own face had spent itself. She touched a nerveless hand:

"If you will tell me everything—"

The girl looked up, trembling. Then, in her hoarse, broken voice, she muttered defiantly:

"Suppose I told you I came here meaning to hurt you?"

"No, no," said Dorothy.

"But I did—there!"

"What good would that do?"

"It would hurt—him. And—and make him feel, as I feel as—as—" Her eyes dropped wearily. "Oh, it don't matter now, does it? I was a bit dotty, eh?" She attempted a laugh that brought tears to Dorothy's eyes. "Now, I ain't got much more strength than a worm. You'd get the best of it. See!" She held out her hand, which trembled. The color ebbed from her cheeks.

"One moment," said Dorothy. "Don't let yourself go!"

She hurried from the room, welcoming action, movement, anything that would banish the curious paralysis of mind which seemed to be assailing her. When she returned with sal volatile and eau de Cologne, after she had administered them, as minute by minute strength came back to her visitor, so also strength returned to Dorothy's mind. She saw the issues involved, and faced them valiantly, putting to rout compromise and weakness.

While Crystal Wride lay half-fainting before her, expediency had whispered: "Take advantage of her weakness, patch her up, pack her into a cab, drop her now and forever out of your life!"

Instead, she took the poor passion-torn creature back to her lodgings, supporting her tenderly.

CHAPTER II.

Dorothy's first impression of these lodgings remained a vivid and indelible brand upon the memory. There were two rooms, leading one from the other, and each was furnished, as the landlady put it, genteelly: a fact which increased rather than diminished the effect they produced upon Dorothy. For extreme misery, such as may be found in slums, for instance, has to the thinking mind an awful dignity, a grim character which appals but chastens the beholder. And even to the unintelligent the realism of the slum is un-

mistakable. We have reached the depths and we know it. From them we can look up, we cannot look down. If any change is possible, that change must be for the better. But in such rooms as Dorothy now found herself, everything, like the tenants, lacked character, had had character once, and had lost it irretrievably. Carpet, curtains, chairs, wardrobe, and bed were, so to speak, *déclassés*. Once they had been good, and clean, and not ill-looking. Now they were soiled, chipped, worn, torn, pitiable to contemplate, the more so because they were carefully arranged with a smirking, forlorn, pathetic attempt to appear better than they were. An armchair, obviously in an inconvenient position, had been placed where it stood to hide a huge ink-stain upon the carpet. A dismal crack in the dull mirror over the chimneypiece was half-hidden by a basket of wax flowers under a glass case. The curtains were looped back into absurd folds to conceal the rents in them. Japanese fans covered grease-marks upon the wall-paper. Garish bits of cheap lace and riband masked broken springs and bulging horsehair. Nothing matched. Every stick had been picked up here and there at sales. One horse-hair chair had massive mahogany legs and a noble width of seat. An alderman might—and possibly had—sat in it. The wardrobe, too, bought for a song because both panels of the door were cracked, had been in its day a fine piece of furniture. Brocades of exquisite texture might have hung in it. Filmy laces and cambrics might have laid upon its once lavender-scented shelves. A marble-topped table displayed an ancient musical box, a theatrical paper, and some faded daguerreotypes. In the center of the mantelpiece, standing upon a Berlin wool mat, was a china clock of *biscuit* Sèvres, the dial encircled by nymphs and attendant *anorini*, a really charming bit, but chipped and broken beyond repairing. It was certain that the clock, which had recorded so many enchanting hours in other places, refused positively to record anything save mute despair in

Vauxhall Bridge Road. But beyond this dreary atmosphere of what had been, was the more terrible certainty of further abasement. Any change must be for the worse. Dorothy saw with absolute clarity of vision what rags would hang in the wardrobe, what men and women might sit in the aldermanic chair!

Once at home, however, Crystal recovered quickly from her condition of semi-collapse. Hitherto she had accepted Dorothy's ministrations without protest, and, perhaps, without surprise, feeling—to use her own words—too much of a worm to resist. Now the blood began to circulate more quickly, the look of slightly animal stupidity left her face, giving place to a dawning intelligence. She eyed Dorothy with increasing alertness. Then she said bluntly:

"You asked me to tell you everything."

"Yes. But if you are still too weak—"

"I'm getting stronger every minute. Why do you want to know? I shouldn't, if I was you. I'd hold on to him, if I'd got him, as you have. The rest of the women in the world might go hang, for me. And how do you know I'm not going to tell you a lot o' lies? Why should you believe what I say?"

Her voice rose, still harsh, with shrill derision in its tones.

"I think you will tell me the truth."

"If I could get him back by tellin' lies, I'd tell 'em. Make no blooming error about that. But I don't think he ever cared *much*. He was grateful, that's all."

"Grateful?"

"I stuck my knife into you then, didn't I? Why should Mr. Richard Gasgoyne be grateful to the likes of me? You want to know, and you shall know. When him and me met for the first time, he was starving—"

"Oh!"

"Ask him! Yes, starving. I fed him. We had our first meal together at my expense, sausages and mashed potatoes. He drinks champagne with

you, I dessay; we had stout, a pot apiece. It's meat and drink, is stout, when you're down on your luck. Dick was dead broke and green! My! But he'd grit, plenty of it; there never was a better-plucked 'un. He might have crawled whining to some swell relations, but he didn't. Well, we had our sausages and stout, and Dick told me that he was tryin' to make a livin' with his pen. He'd pawned everything he'd got 'cept what he stood up in, and his landlady had told him he needn't come back unless he brought his rent with him. Maybe you know all this?"

"He told me a part of it."

"But never mentioned me, I'll be bound?"

Dorothy hesitated; then she said "No."

"Not likely. Well, I," the pride in her voice flowed strongly; her fine eyes regained some of their fire, "I helped him out of his hole. I found him lodgings in the same house where I lodged; and I found him work. I desay he told you about a set of articles about how girls like me live, eh?"

"Yes; and I've read them. They were wonderfully well done."

"They were hot, an' hot out of the oven. All this time we was pals, you understand, nothing else. I was singin' and dancin' at the Alcazar then, earnin' enough money to keep me just alive an' kickin', not a ha'penny more, but I might have had my brougham and diamonds, too—for the askin'. Believe that?"

"Yes."

"It's God's truth. I liked my work and I liked my independence. Then Dick fell ill, that was the winter before last. Did he tell you?"

"That he nearly died—yes."

"I nussed him. The doctor said I pulled him through. There wasn't a doubt of that. I did. He was broken again, and very, very low, double pneumonia; I think he wanted to die; but I wouldn't let him. I tell you I fought for his life, and I won it—won it. Yes, I did. He can't deny it."

"I am quite sure he wouldn't."

"You're right, he wouldn't. And he

was grateful. He saw how it was with me, and—and—you can guess the rest."

Silence fell upon the genteel room. Dorothy, unable to look at the speaker, stared helplessly at her surroundings. She could see no books, no needlework, none of those blessed trivialities where-with lonely women distract their thoughts and cheat the leaden hours. She was beginning to understand why that fearful wild look had come into this unhappy creature's face. And yet everything connected with this tragic story was subordinate to the man and her thought of him. From the first, she had said to herself: "I must be fair to Dick. I must not judge him till I know all."

After a tremendous pause, Dorothy said slowly: "I can guess part of the rest, but—"

"Ask any questions you like."

"You were innocent, till—"

"Innocent?" she laughed. "Did I say I was innocent? I told you I liked independence, not innocence. Dick was not the first."

"I see."

Some subtle intonation, some hardly perceptible gesture, may have served to indicate Dorothy's hardly self-conscious sense of relief. Crystal Wride said quickly:

"You'll forgive him?"

But Dorothy made no reply. It seemed incredible to reflect that she had parted from Gasgoyne that same afternoon, barely two hours before, and that she was going to dine with him at eight that same evening.

"This happened the winter before last. After he got back his health—"

"He began to make money. He used to say he'd caught the hang of it, and found his market. We had good times—on the river—"

"On the river?" Dorothy gasped.

"Yes. Rare larks. But we stuck to business. He had his job; I had mine. Then his paper sent him to Turkey, as you know."

"Yes, I know." Dorothy could hear Gasgoyne's voice, the unmistakable emphasis he had laid upon the gladness wherewith he had accepted the mis-

sion. "I was particularly keen to go," he had said, "because I was sick of London, sick of my life there." But she, the girl who had wrestled for his life, what of her?

"You had to part?"

"Yes; it was awful, because when he went out o' my life there was nothing else. See! I'd got so as I couldn't do without him. He takes up a lot o' room, does Dick. Of course, you've noticed that?"

Again her eyes played keenly, but with a certain furtiveness, over Dorothy's pale, pain-twisted face. A physiognomist might have detected a flitting expression of cruelty; a cruelty not alien to jealousy. When Crystal had seen that Dorothy winced at her familiar use of Gasgoyne's Christian name, she had used it with unnecessary frequency.

"After he'd gone, the fog seemed to settle down thick, but I stuck to work, and saved money against his return. I took these rooms, and waited."

Dorothy shuddered. Unconsciously, the speaker had shown an astonishing tact in abstaining from details, in leaving the "waiting" to Dorothy's imagination.

"I suppose you had some friends?"

"A girl or two. They don't count. Girl friends never did count with me. I never spoke to a man, except to tell him to mind his own business," she added fiercely, "if that is what you mean."

"I did not mean that."

"I worried through the time, thinking of Dick. I used to sit in this chair for hours and hours, with my eyes half-shut, seein' him. I could make him out plain as plain. I'd a letter or two from him. I read 'em every day. He writes beautiful letters, as you know."

The "as you know" pierced deep. If the desire to kill had passed from the woman, the desire to wound remained.

"He came back last April, after the war was over," said Dorothy, wishing to bring her torment to an end.

"On the 15th," said Crystal moodily. "He came in, kissed me, and sat down

in your chair. You ain't a-going to faint, are you?"

"No," said Dorothy.

She remembered Gasgoyne's allusion to pitch. Now, in some indescribable way, the pitch seemed to have touched her. She also had become part of this soiled, unfragrant, battered room. Dick had sat where she was sitting, had looked at the clock which had stopped forever, and had wished that he had died outside Plevna.

That, she knew. Again she heard his voice, when she asked the natural question: "Weren't you glad to get back?" his odd glance aside, his half-nervous reply: "Oh, as to that, you know, I was not coming back, like some of the other fellows, to a cheery home."

To a cheery home! He had come back to this, crawled back to this, because nothing else was possible to a man with a spark of gratitude or decent feeling. She had fed him when he was starving, had nursed him, had loved him devotedly.

"We began again, but it wasn't quite the same. And we had rows, awful rows. I suppose I knew somehow that you was coming in sight. In May you arrived."

"And then?"

There was a pause. To Dorothy everything hung upon the answer to this question. Had Gasgoyne cast off this faithful creature with brutality, indifference, or with flimsy excuses? From her knowledge of him, she answered "No" to these charges. At any rate, Gasgoyne had come to the end of the road.

"He never spoke of you to me," continued the girl defiantly, "but I guessed that Miss Right had turned up, and it made me mad. While he was away I'd studied to improve myself. I worked hard; yes, I did. I dessay you've noticed that I speak like you do now, but when he come back he never noticed the change. Perhaps I was fool enough to hope that he might marry me some day, perhaps I knew in my heart of hearts that he never, never would. Bah! I'll be gettin' maudlin' in a minute. Anyway, we had another

row, the last. I let myself go, I tell you, and he never said a word, not one. He sat where you're sitting, a-staring at that clock, just as you're starin' at it now, and when I'd said my say, he got up, and went away without a word. Mind you, I give him the chuck; I told him to clear out and never come back. He never did."

"But, surely—"

"He wrote a letter, offering to settle some money; it wasn't a bad letter; but I tore it up into tiny pieces and sent it back to him. Then I read the bit in the paper about his marriage to you. That knocked me out. I went clean off my nut. Then I caught the worst kind of a cold, an' lost my voice, and came jolly near to losin' my billet at the Levity. All this time I was tryin' to find out where you lived. I went to a big house in Portman Square, and the flunkies slammed the door in my face. Dick had changed his address. But I hung about the offices of his paper, and one afternoon followed him back to your house. Afterward I watched him with you, more than once. Yesterday, when him an' you was spoonin' in the park, I was behind the bushes."

Dorothy groaned. Was nothing to be spared her? Was she also condemned to drink the lees of another's cup, to share every pang, to feel her heart stealing out in pity from the man she loved to the woman from whom she shrank, to feel, also, with what futile resentment, with what shamefaced humiliation, that she was sinking deeper and deeper into a slough of misery and despond which must needs engulf her forever and ever?

And, as before, in her own room, the temptation assailed her with greater insistence and vehemence to wrench herself free from contamination, to shut eyes and ears to a misery she could not mitigate, to rise and go, and never to come back.

"You'll forgive him, eh?"

The harsh voice acted as a sort of tonic; its rasping, astringent quality seemed to tighten resolution.

"I have not had time to think of

myself or of him," replied Dorothy hesitatingly.

"You will forgive him," said the woman, and the jealousy in her voice, the yearning, moved Dorothy profoundly. "Some wouldn't, I know. He's no great catch for s ch as you, is Dick; but you love him, don't you?"

They had risen, and were looking each into the other's eyes. Dorothy's cheeks flushed scarlet. That everything she held most sacred should be dragged in the mud, trampled in the gutter, soiled permanently, and that she should stand unresisting, unable even to protest, with palsied mind and body. She made no reply.

"You love him," continued the other, "and you'll marry him, and be the mother of his children—"

"In the name of pity—" entreated Dorothy.

The coarse fiber of the dancer failed to interpret these subtle vibrations.

"What are you making such a fuss about? You're not a schoolgirl. How old are you, anyway?"

"Fifty," said Dorothy, after a pause. "Fifty? Oh, I see. Well, I'm a hundred and fifty. Now, look here, I was always one o' the outspoken ones. I wanted to kill you, spoil your good looks, at any rate, not that you're a patch on me for them, but, somehow, you've had the best of me. In your quiet way you've come out on top. Well, good-by. Get married! I sha'n't forbid the banns."

"What—are—you going to do?"

"Me?" she laughed derisively. "What price this little lot, eh? Who's bidding? Old Nick."

"Don't!"

"Why not? What is it to you?"

"Everything."

"Garn! Talk's cheap. What would you give to save my soul, my soul," she laughed drearily, "which, like that old clock," she indicated contemptuously the timepiece, "has ticked away its best days? Come—how much?"

She leaned forward, almost touching Dorothy's smooth, pale cheeks, her eyes smoldering with derision and interrogation. Dorothy said nothing. What

could she say? Yet she faced the question, tried to answer it. Suppose a great sacrifice were demanded.

"How much?" mocked the other. "All your wedding-presents?"

"Willingly."

"That would be nothing. Your friends would give you more. What else?"

She saw that Dorothy was attempting to solve the problem. At once her sense of the dramatic gripped her. She laid her hand upon Dorothy's arm, and in a harsh, penetrating voice evoked horrors.

"If, to-night, I went to the river, and stood on Westminster Bridge with nothing between me and the water, nothing between me and the devil, except you——"

"Yes?"

"Would you put off your marriage one year to save me?"

"Yes."

The answer came quietly, with a dignity not wasted upon the one who was of inferior clay.

"I don't believe it."

But Dorothy knew that she did believe it: that curious sense of mastery over a fellow creature, of being able, however inaccurately, to measure, to appraise one's influence, came upon her with overpowering conviction. A great moment in three lives had begun.

"It is true, Crystal." She spoke her name gently, and saw the hard features so close to hers soften. "You hurt me just now, more than you will ever know, when you spoke of my future happiness. That happiness was very near a few hours ago; now it seems far away."

"You'll be happy enough soon."

"Not at your expense, not with the feeling, with—with the knowledge," she fixed her eyes steadily upon the other's, "that you are going——"

"To hell? Out with it. How squeamish you swells are! Well, you're not a bad sort, and you mean what you say now, but to-morrow——" she laughed drearily, not finishing her sentence.

"I shall feel just the same to-morrow."

"I sha'n't, thank the Lord!"

Dorothy shuddered, seeing the river, the Lethe of all such despairing creatures. Crystal, pale and haggard, seemed to have collapsed. She lay back in her chair, but between her reddened eyelids, narrowed to a mere feline slit, glanced furtively at the girl Dick wanted to marry. A minute at least must have passed before Dorothy, leaning forward, said quietly:

"You have made up your mind?"

"Yes."

Listlessly, a certain strength manifested itself in the monosyllable. Dorothy never doubted that Crystal had resolved to destroy herself. She stood up.

"Because he is marrying me?"

"That's it."

"And if I don't marry him?"

"You will."

"But if I don't?"

"What d'yer mean?"

Crystal also had risen. The two faces were hardly a foot apart.

"I mean this," said Dorothy, speaking almost in a whisper. "I know how you feel. I can put myself in your place. You might live without Dick; you have lived without Dick, but you can't live knowing that he belongs to me."

Crystal nodded.

"You've hit it. I've seen starvin' kids a-flattenin' their noses against the cook-shop windows. The sight of other folks' blessings has driven many a woman cursing crazy."

"You asked me just now if I would put off my wedding for a year to save you, and I said 'Yes.'"

"Ah! You haven't forgiven him?"

"You are wrong, I have."

"Well, I'm——"

"Go back to your work, to an honest, independent life. I'll help you, I'll do what I can to make things easier, but they'll be hard for both of us."

"You'll chuck him at the last moment?"

"If you promise to do what I ask."

"My! Won't he be wild! And if I refuse, if——"

"In that case," Dorothy's voice hardened, "I shall marry at once. Why not?"

"And for a year, a whole year, you'll have nothing to do with him?"

"If you insist——"

"Why, what d'ye take me for?" She laughed coarsely. "You and he mustn't meet; and you mustn't write."

"I'm willing to pledge myself to that."

Crystal smiled. Her brain working slower began to grasp the two sides of the situation. Salvation was presented as a mountain between Dick and a rival. Damnation destroyed not only herself, but this obstacle also.

"It's a go," she said, with a harsh laugh. "I'll hang on a bit longer. Only I'd like to see his face when you tell him; he's accustomed to having his own way, is Dick."

She saw the shadows in Dorothy's eyes, and misinterpreted their meaning.

"You'll weaken, maybe?" she suggested.

"No."

"How am I to be sure o' that? And if you do weaken, if you do," she began to tremble, and then, controlling herself, added fiercely: "Suppose you've been playing with me, bluffin'? Eh? How do I know you're not an actress, or a liar. Anyway, you're a woman, a girl, and he's a strong man. You'll be putty in his hands."

To her astonishment, she saw Dorothy's eyes wandering round the room, evidently in search of something.

"What do you want?" she gasped.

"Paper, pen, and ink."

"Oh!"

She crossed the room, opened a battered bureau, and took from it writing-materials.

"Goin' to write to him, are you?"

"No."

Consumed with curiosity, the elder girl watched the younger. Dorothy chose a plain sheet of paper, and wrote a few lines upon it. These she read aloud:

"The marriage arranged between Mr. Richard Gascoyne and Dorothy, daughter of the late George Fairfax, F. R. C. S., &c., has been indefinitely postponed."

Dorothy placed this and one of her cards in an envelope, which she directed to the editor of a morning paper.

"You can post it yourself," she said quietly.

They parted without more words. Crystal, indeed, stood agape with surprise; but when the front door had slammed, her frowning brows relaxed. She went to her bedroom, and examined herself in a looking-glass; then she glanced with longing at her bed, feeling, as she looked, dead beat. The temptation to lie down, to rest aching limbs and head, assailed her. But if she failed to appear at the theater, she would certainly lose her engagement, hanging already by a thread.

For a moment she hesitated; then, with a defiant smile upon her face, she began to repair, with paint and powder, the ravages of misery and madness. A few hours later, after the performance at the Levity, the stage-manager said to her:

"You're in your old form, I'm glad to see. Struck a bit of all right, I dare say."

"I nearly did," replied Crystal, "but if you want the truth, the bit of all right struck me instead."

CHAPTER III.

After leaving Vauxhall Bridge Road, Dorothy did not return at once to the Doll's House. She wished to prepare for the coming interview with Gascoyne, to fortify herself with the tonic of movement and fresh air, to shake off, if it were possible, the stifling, clinging atmosphere of those shabby, soiled rooms into which she had walked a girl, out of which she came a woman. For the moment all human habitations were, so to speak, begrimed with soot and smoke. The large spaces of Hyde Park allured her because they reminded her of the clean country; she eyed the foot-passengers almost with hostility, as if they were trespassers. She wished

passionately that she could be really alone in a vast prairie, breathing untainted air, seeing nothing but earth and sky.

Presently she found an empty bench, and sat down. In the mid-distance sparkled the Serpentine; far away to her left she could see the sharp, irregular outline of the roofs of the big houses in Park Lane; hard by, to her right, was the Powder Magazine. She had passed it hundreds of times, had played as a child within a few yards of it, but till now its tremendous significance had escaped her notice. She surveyed its squat ugliness with dilating eyes. That it should be placed here, in the heart of a pleasureland designed only for man's recreation and entertainment, seemed to her inevitable. What better spot could be found? As an object-lesson, however, its utility was impaired, because it never blew up. A violent explosion occurring unexpectedly at least once a year would be so natural and appropriate!

Such thoughts flitted through Dorothy's mind like bats dimly discerned in the twilight. She realized that in her an explosion had taken place, and she was unable as yet to determine the nature and extent of her injuries. With a curious sense of detachment she began to think of its effect upon Gasgoyne. She had suffered laceration in silence. Gasgoyne would cry out. Already she could hear a soul-piercing protest. If she could spare him, if she could temper the horrible suddenness of it all, the indecent violence, how gladly would she do so, even if her own pain were doubled in intensity.

Perhaps, at this moment, anticipating the suffering of another, the maternal instinct burst from a merely dormant bud into full flower. She felt that she had become years older than her lover, that her love for him had changed its aspect. When she told Crystal that she was fifty, unconsciously she had uttered the truth. The explosion, indeed, had shattered—temporarily, at any rate—her youth. It is not exaggeration to add that she felt a greater pity for Crystal and for Gasgoyne than for her-

self. Men, stricken to death upon the battle-field, have been known to minister to others but lightly wounded, oblivious of their own mortal injuries. In this sense of partial paralysis, Dorothy considered what she should say to Gasgoyne.

When she rose to return to her home and the man who was awaiting her there, it was nearly eight o'clock. The world was going out to dine. The handsoms flashed by, revealing laughing faces, wide expanses of shirt, shimmering satins, and filmy laces. Dorothy stared at the revelers in wonder. For the first time, she felt herself to be an outsider, beyond the pale of these pleasure-seekers. And yet, without doubt, explosions had been in their lives. Their mirth, for the most part, was superficial, indicating nothing so much as the desire to conceal what lay beneath. In time, possibly in a day or two, she would join this procession as before, seemingly not the least joyous of the pilgrims, and make-believe with the best of them.

Susan Judkins told her that Mr. Gasgoyne was in the drawing-room.

"You're very late, Miss Dorothy."

"It doesn't matter," said Dorothy.

She went into the drawing-room, and closed the door. Gasgoyne, who was reading the evening paper and glancing over an article of his own, rose to greet her with a glad exclamation. She let him kiss her, wondering if it were for the last time. Then he said, not crossly, but wonderingly:

"How very late you are, Doll. Where have you been?"

She answered directly:

"In Vauxhall Bridge Road."

Afterward she felt that she had dealt him too sudden a blow. He stared at her intently, and repeated her phrase:

"In Vauxhall Bridge Road?"

"Yes. Crystal Wride saw the announcement of our marriage; she came here; I took her back in a cab; she told me everything, you understand—*everything*."

His brain leaped to a triumphant conclusion.

"You have forgiven me, my sweet Dorothy; you let me kiss you."

"I have forgiven you," she said dully.

"How dared she come here?" he muttered. His face was slightly flushed; his eyes sparkled angrily.

"She wanted to—to hurt me."

"But she didn't?"

"Not in the sense you mean."

"If she had—"

"If she had—"

"I'd have— Never mind!"

She saw his jaw set in the effort to restrain himself.

"But, once, she was—"

"What has been, has been. I can tell you this: your little finger is worth more to me than her whole body."

"And what price do you put upon her soul?"

"What do you mean?"

"That is what I must tell you."

She told the story from beginning to end, with simple dignity. Gasgoyne, leaning his head upon his hand, listened attentively, not interrupting by word or gesture. So he had listened to the other, in absolute silence; and at the end he had got up and had gone, without a word. Dorothy remembered this. With him, she reflected, silence indicated fear, not lack, of speech. He might say nothing now, because of the danger of saying too much. When she had finished, he did get up, and she thought from his face and manner that he was about to leave her. Instead, he said with seeming irrelevance:

"Did you hear the newsboys in the streets?"

"I paid no attention to them. Why?"

"Shere Ali is going to give us serious trouble. I was asked a day or two ago if I would act as correspondent for our paper in Afghanistan. I refused, of course." He stared at her tentatively. She was too tired and muddled to understand him. Then, with an entire change of manner, speaking quickly and vehemently, he continued: "Doll, you have let a clever, designing woman get the better of you. I know her power, none better. You are about as fit to deal with her as a

dove is with a cat. You have sacrificed yourself and me. Let us admit that I deserve punishment. But, loving you, knowing that you love me, I protest against your punishment. You have set yourself the impossible task of reforming Crystal Wride. She was crooked long before I met her. Do you think you can make her straight? She has told part of the truth, not all. She did find me half-starving; she gave me bread and the first hint how to earn it for myself; she nursed me. I paid her in full, to the uttermost farthing, with compound interest." He closed his lips sharply, as if he were afraid to say more.

Dorothy understood that much more could have been said. It was like Dick, she reflected, to refuse to justify himself at the expense of the woman who had given to him so much. But his detestation of her glowered in his eyes, twisted his mouth, made his finely formed hands tremble. After a significant pause, he added dully:

"At the end, you understand, she drove me away. You did not think for a moment I abandoned her?"

"No, no. She told me that. All the same, she—she loved you."

"Love! What a word to use. Oh, the ingenuity of this woman! She knows that my tongue is tied, that to you—" he broke off suddenly; when he continued, his voice was steady again. "I don't excuse myself, and if you—you chose to take the line which some girls not fit to black your boots would take, if you break from me because of what I have been and done, if your milk-white soul recoils from my defilement, I do not blame you. But you're too good and wise and kind. No; you break with me, a stout, seaworthy vessel, so as to drag into port a derelict. And I have a presentiment that she'll sink you."

"Dear, dear Dick, I must make the attempt. If you are right about her, poor creature, if she is really crooked, if I fail utterly, then—then—"

Gasgoyne laughed bitterly.

"Oh, yes; then the ban will be lifted. And in the meantime we are to

wait, to wait. Let me tell you that she'll keep us waiting."

"Dick, if you could look into my heart."

"I can, I do," he replied. "It is because of that I feel so helpless. You have tied yourself into knots which I know that I can't undo, and that you won't."

"Time may undo them."

"Time?" He regarded her keenly. "Time, you say? Ah, I see. Good and wise as you are, Doll, you have the instinct of your sex to sit on the fence while others fight for the possession of you. Hear me out! Time, eh? To a man there is no time save the present. This is our hour, but you don't know it. You prefer to live in some shadowy future."

"Dick!"

"If I'm brutal, forgive me, but it's you I'm thinking of, you. I shall be busy enough in Afghanistan——"

"Then you are going?"

"Yes, I am going, unless you say—stay." Then he added explosively: "You think time will put things right, bring us together, to be happy forever and ever. Doll, time is not so kind as that. A year hence—who knows? We shall have changed, that is inevitable. If we come together, it will not be the same thing."

"Why not?"

"The experience of all the world is against it. From a mistaken sense of honor you are parting us."

"If I could think otherwise——"

"My God, how obstinate you are!"

"I have promised."

"You promised to marry me next Tuesday week. Look here, Doll, let me deal with Crystal Wride." His voice grew persuasive.

"Let me deal with her," he repeated.

"No, no; it would be too cruel."

"Lay the facts before your friend, Lady Curragh. Come, let her arbitrate."

"Dick, how can I leave a point of conscience to another?"

Gasgoyne frowned. He saw so clearly; and her vision was so blurred. This maddened him.

"All right," he said harshly. "From this moment you are free."

"Free?"

"I mean that you will do as you please, live where you please, associate with whom you please."

"And you?"

"I? Oh, I shall be bound to you always." Then, seeing her lips quiver, her eyes wet, he made his last appeal. Without warning, he took her into his arms, kissing her hair, her cheeks, her lips with a passion more eloquent and overpowering than any words. At the end he said curtly:

"Doll, am I to go or to stay?"

"Oh, Dick, you break my heart; but you must go."

"Good-by," he said, and went.

After he had gone, Solomon tried to comfort her. The sympathy in his eyes was unmistakable, although he knew that his mistress had acted with indiscreet haste. But dogs would not be the finest comrades in affliction if, like bipeds, they tried to stanch tears with words. When Dorothy cried, Solomon cuddled up close to her; but presently he jumped from her lap, and sat up, begging, entreating her to stop because in his opinion she had wept enough. He whined, and then barked sharply. Dorothy looked at him.

"You're right," she said. "I'm a fool to cry my eyes out; but, oh, Solomon, I'm so miserable."

CHAPTER IV.

What tragedy has not its humors? When it became known in Portman Square that "poor, dear Dorothy"—from the hour she left their house, the Helminghams invariably spoke of their niece with these qualifying adjectives—was not going to marry that "adventurer" Richard Gasgoyne (already en route for Afghanistan), Sir Augustus proclaimed the interference of Providence, and that he, for his part, was willing to overlook a most regrettable incident. Lady Helmingham ordered her carriage and drove to Oakley Street.

"Why has this absurd marriage been broken off?"

"It has been—postponed," faltered Dorothy.

"Why, why? I insist, your uncle insists, upon knowing the truth. People are saying that you have been jilted."

"As if I cared!"

Aunt Charlotte groaned.

"You ought to care; it is disgraceful not to care. And we, all of us, are in an embarrassing position. Everybody is chattering, and I have to—fib. Last night the dear Duke of Anglia—oh, you are the most exasperating young person."

"I must be," said Dorothy meekly—she was feeling very limp, for Dick was on his way to Brindisi—then, vehemently, she entreated: "Please—please don't ask any more questions." At her distress the good aunt melted.

"Very well. Only you must come home with me, my dear child. You are as white as a sheet. We'll go down into the country next week, and our fine air—and, perhaps, some cod-liver oil—and a little cheerful companionship—"

"You have always been too kind to—"

"These things will happen," purred Aunt Charlotte. "Why, when I was about your age, I had an affair"—the worthy dame sighed faintly—"with a charming young fellow whom I positively adored. He was in a line regiment, and in his uniform I can assure you that he looked—well, I have a daguerreotype, which I may show you some day. He jilted me—the wretch! and I cried my eyes out. But everything turned out for the best. Within a year I met your dear uncle. Shall I tell Susan Judkins to pack your boxes?"

"Aunt Charlotte, you mustn't think me ungrateful, but I must stay here. I must—I must."

"You mustn't, my dear; you really mustn't. Come, be reasonable."

"That's it. If only I were not reasonable, if I could feel and behave as Amy behaves."

The fond mother blinked, unable to believe her ears.

"You don't accuse Amy of being unreasonable, Dorothy?"

"She is a perfect dear," said Dorothy hastily, "but the object of her life seems to be the study of your wishes, not her own."

"And what more natural?"

"To me it seems so unnatural. She is twenty years old, and apparently quite healthy, but the exercise she likes best is a two hours' drive every afternoon with you."

"Good gracious! You are certainly a most strange young woman."

"Dear Aunt Charlotte, I am sure I must be, if you say so, but don't you see that because I am such a stranger to you it is better that we should live apart?"

"The scandalous things that will be said—!"

"As to that—pouf-f!"

"My dear, you should not say 'pouf-f-f' to me."

"I say it to Mrs. Grundy, not to you."

In the end, Lady Helmingham retired defeated. Then Sir Augustus wrote a letter in the spirit in which he ventured to hope it would be read by his dead sister's child. Dorothy cried over it, and laughed over it, but she declined to go down into East Anglia.

Lady Curragh attempted to move this well-meaning but reckless young person from Oakley Street. As Moira Dunsany, she had been Dorothy's first and almost only great friend. After the death of George Fairfax, the girls saw but little of each other. Then Moira married Lord Curragh, and immediately captured a position in London society, which gradually became, so to speak, a sort of Gibraltar. In the late seventies, it will be remembered, the married woman began to assert herself. The odious expression "professional beauty" was coined in those prehistoric times. The great American invasion had begun. The boldest of the bold among the young wives drove in hansoms, lunched and dined in restaurants, smoked cigarettes,

and played poker. The Old Guard, headed by the early Victorian duchesses, predicted the end of all things, a *débâcle*—everybody else was enormously amused.

Moira Curragh had wit, high health, and an appetite for what she called the good things of life. Her Gibraltar, a snug house in Curzon Street, was held to be impregnable against the assaults of bores of whatever caliber. Very big guns indeed opened fire upon this small fortress—there were mining and counter-mining, frontal attacks and sorties, much sniping, and more than one case of treason within the garrison, but, in the end, the siege was raised.

To Moira Curragh Dorothy told her story. Being an Irish woman and an optimist, Moira was strongly of opinion that things would come right. Gasgoyne would return from Afghanistan covered with glory—Crystal Wride, touched by Dorothy's self-sacrifice, would become a reformed character, and marry, perhaps, a well-to-do tradesman—Dorothy's own wedding would transmute all the tears that had been shed into diamonds and rubies. Into this jam was popped a few grains of powder.

"Of course, you've behaved like a saint, but I feel most awfully sorry for your Dick."

"You think I ought——"

"Let us leave the oughts to the tabbies. Personally, I should have kept out of Pimlico."

"Pimlico came to Chelsea. In my place, you would have done what I did."

"I dare say. I generally do the wrong thing, although I say the right word. I say to you: 'Come to Homberg.' If you stop here when everybody is out of town you'll get horribly blue, and you'll forget how to laugh. By the time Romeo comes back, you'll be a fright."

"I shall stay here."

Not long after this, Lady Curragh saw Crystal Wride dancing and singing at the Levity. Next day she said to Dorothy:

"I've seen that girl—she's not likely

to marry a greengrocer. How did Solomon receive her?"

"He tried to bite her, poor creature."

"Solomon is wiser than any of us. This woman meant to scratch your face, and I wish she had. But you chose to wear your heart upon your sleeve, and she was clever enough to put her beak and claws into that instead. Have you heard from Romeo?"

"No."

"You've written, of course?"

"No. You see, I promised *her* that for a year I would have no communication with him."

"Doll, what a heavenly fool you are!"

"If you think that I'm proud of myself, you are even a bigger fool than I am."

Shortly after this Lady Curragh went to Homburg.

During the dog-days, Solomon, naturally enough, became rather cross. He hated Oakley Street, and protested hourly against the heat and confinement of town life. Dorothy paid several visits to Vauxhall Bridge Road, but Solomon refused to accompany her. So she went alone. At first, Crystal assumed a slightly sullen, defiant manner—Dorothy knew that she had something to say, and not the ghost of a notion how to say it. Nevertheless, between the two girls stretched an attenuated thread of sympathy. And, presently, Crystal spoke. The stage-manager, omniscient, of course, had hinted at preferment.

"He says I'm too good for a music-hall." Crystal imparted this information with an air of conscious pride. "He'll get me a billet at one of the regular theaters. With half a chance, I'll show 'em at the Gaiety what I can do. I mean business, straight business, on and off the stage. I can sing, and dance, and act. Kate Vaughan can't do more, can she?"

"You are very ambitious."

"I'll get to the top of the profesh, if I can. You make no error about that."

Dorothy divined the truth. Crystal had a will made of triple brass. She

might climb high. If she became a star, would Dick be dazzled? This question shone in Crystal's eyes, rang in her voice. Because of Dick she meant "straight business." There was a pathos about her determination which brought tears to Dorothy's heart, knowing, as she did, Dick's real feelings. By this time she had guessed that Crystal was very clever, although she displayed a subtlety, a finesse in her intercourse with Dorothy which Dorothy did not perceive or appreciate till afterward. To give an instance: Crystal spoke often of her voice as true enough and strong enough to attract the groundlings of a music-hall, but quite untrained. Dorothy paid for a number of lessons, of which Crystal took every advantage. Dorothy reflected that she was doing penance, for she had come to dislike Crystal more, and to pity her less. She was aware that the dancer had angled for a check; and she wrote it—you must understand—not in surrender to cupidity and acuteness, but in obedience to an ever-increasing desire to atone for what Gasgoyne had done and left undone. She admitted candidly that Crystal was entitled to great credit (being the woman she was), inasmuch as she had refused Dick's money. For Crystal loved money as a cat loves sardines. Dorothy took her out to dine, and discovered that she was greedy, and not ashamed of it. Upon the other hand, she exercised self-denial at home, because, as she pointed out—if there were "ups" in the "profesh," no member of it could wisely ignore the "downs." She exhibited genius in the making and remaking of the stage costumes, which she was expected to buy out of her small salary. Dorothy, after an inspection of the mahogany wardrobe, wrote another check. She wrote also a letter to Moira Curragh, which explains motives in her own words:

I am seeing a great deal of C. W., who interests me enormously, although I know that she delights in rubbing my fur the wrong way. She is intensely ambitious, poor creature, and really believes that she lacks nothing except "luck" to eclipse Kate Vaughan, who is her ideal. Also, she has

really an elementary moral sense. She might advance quickly, if she were willing to do as the "others" do. Of these "others" I hear too much, for what they do and whom they do are a favorite subject of conversation. One is forced to the conclusion that a woman of that class, not so much immoral as unmoral, is certain to achieve a sort of success and even a position if she makes the most of her opportunities. C.'s temptations are simply frightful. And she resists them valiantly. This, somehow, appeals to me—and she knows it! I have given her money, but she is not grateful, or perhaps I should rather say that her gratitude, to quote some wit whose name I have forgotten, is "a lively sense of further favors to come." But somewhere hidden away is a heart. Of that I have not a shadow of doubt. I have had a glimpse of it more than once.

Often she hurls Dick's name at my head, I try to duck, but she hits me every time, and smiles triumphantly. Yesterday she asked me pointblank if I had written to him, and this after my promise to her! I said "No" with a feeble show of dignity, and she laughed in my face, with a derisive "Garn!" which set my nerves on edge. I am sure she thinks that he and I are in constant communication. To my great relief, she has secured a place in a country company. When she returns to town she will be given a smart part at the Gaiety; this is spoken of with gasping solemnity as the second rung on fame's ladder. I am leaving town also, and mean to bury myself with Susan and Solomon in some tiny village in Touraine.

Dorothy, indeed, had selected Touraine, because it was a part of France unknown to her. For the first time in her life she had become possessed of an overpowering desire to be alone. Under other skies she might, perhaps, be able to adjust, to arrange, and classify her disordered emotions and sensibilities. Lady Curragh replied to the letter we have just presented by entreating her friend to join her in Ireland, whither she had gone after the cure at Homburg.

We face the bay of Donegal, and you can breathe the purest and most bracing air in the world. Doll, you are blue, and you'll be getting morbid if you go on prowling about Vauxhall Bridge Road. Your Dick, I see, is covering himself with glory as a war correspondent. Indeed, I can't help feeling that things have turned out for the best. Dick will become famous. Curragh says he is of the stuff that all successful men are made of. Do come here! We are such a cheery party.

But Dorothy declined this kind in-

vitation, and others. Her cousin, Amy, wrote prettily from East Anglia, where the partridges had done quite too splendidly well, so dear papa said. Apropos that rather nice Lord Ipswich was coming to shoot. And Dorothy ought really to see the herbaceous border. And the Maltese cat had had kittens; such darlings! And there was a rather nice new baby at the vicarage. And mother sent fondest love. . . . Dorothy sighed as she read this simple epistle—for the moment she envied Amy, and wished that she could think everything and everybody "rather nice." Then, in reaction, she told herself positively that she would sooner spend a month with Crystal Wride, even in Vauxhall Bridge Road, than a week with Amy at Helmingham Court. Crystal, with all her shortcomings, was strong, alert, vital—a woman. The other was only a caterpillar, crawling from one blade of grass to another.

Upon the eve of departure from town she learned a piece of news of enormous importance. During the past six weeks she had been curiously sensible that Crystal was a creature of tempestuous moods—alternately optimist and pessimist, but always extreme—either triumphantly gay or despairingly miserable. That there was a physiological cause for this, Dorothy was too young and inexperienced to know or even to surmise. She had assigned these humors to a certain inherent strain of wildness bordering, in moments of stress, upon actual insanity. Now the true cause was revealed with appalling suddenness.

Dorothy never visited Crystal in the morning, which is a short cut to the conclusion that they knew, each, the half of the other, for the afternoon girl may be—and generally is—an entirely different person from the early morning girl. Upon this particular occasion, Dorothy was obliged to call upon Crystal at nine—an hour when Vauxhall Bridge Road presents its most slovenly and out-of-elbows appearance. The landlady herself answered Dorothy's ring at the bell, and said tartly that her lodger was not up yet. A

question or two revealed the fact that Crystal had eaten no breakfast, and was feeling "very low."

"Do you know what causes this depression?"

"No, I don't," replied the landlady, "but I can guess—and if my guess is right, out she goes, bag and baggage, and more o' the last than the first."

"I shall go up," said Dorothy.

The woman eyed her with wrinkled irritability—then in a softer voice she muttered:

"I wouldn't if I was you, miss. If you'll take my advice, you'll off it, and not come back. She ain't fit for the likes of you, an' never was."

Dorothy went up-stairs.

Crystal, half-clothed, was lying upon the bed, white and listless. But the sight of her spick-and-span visitor roused her. She sat up, trembling.

"Why have you come spying here?"

"Spying?"

"The door was open—I heard you ask that woman what was the matter."

"If anything is the matter, won't you let me help you?"

"You?"

She began to laugh.

"Stop that!" said Dorothy, with something of her father's authority; then, emboldened by the effect of her words, she added sharply: "What is the matter? Tell me at once."

At these peremptory words Crystal opened her eyes, and her lips parted, while a wave of color rushed into her pale cheeks. Then she smiled slowly, with a subtle expression, compounded—so it seemed to Dorothy—of triumph, derision, and distress.

"All right. Only you must swear that you won't tell Dick. Swear!"

"I swear."

"Bend down your head. I'll whisper it."

"Oh!" said Dorothy faintly, when the other had whispered half a dozen words. She shrank back from the bed, the color ebbing and flowing in her cheeks, her eyes dilating.

"Thought you'd squeal," said Crystal contemptuously. "Now, you can take your hook."

Dorothy sat down, struggling with her feelings. Civil war was raging in both head and heart. Crystal watched her through half-closed lids, the same smile upon her lips.

An interminable, unendurable silence followed. Finally pity drove everything else out of Dorothy's heart. With her vivid imagination she was able to supply details—the shock of surprise, the horror, the anguish, the madness. She tried to see herself in a like position, she tried to picture (and failed) her cousin, Amy, Moira Curragh, other girls of her own age, who had been delicately and tenderly nurtured from the hour each was born. Why, between human beings, should such an abysmal gulf have been fixed? Across an ocean of innumerable differences of convention, association, environment, Dorothy gazed upon the woman who was destined to be the mother of Dick's child.

Hours seemed to have passed, when she stammered out: "You must let Dick know."

"Not yet," said Crystal. "I'm not quite such a fool as that."

The sneer hardly touched Dorothy, although the fact penetrated. And yet, surely Dick would wish to be told, would claim the right to succor, would play his part (if it were necessary to play a part), would do his duty. Something of this, feebly expressed, escaped her.

"You don't think he'd chuck his job to come back to me, do you? Not he. I'd be ashamed of him if he did. But when he does come back, I shall have something to show him worth looking at. That's a cert."

Her pride rang out unmistakably, the pride of the mother. Then, in an entirely different tone, she continued: "Now you see why I've screwed every ha'penny out of you I could get, why I made you promise not to write to him—and I knew you was the sort to keep the promise, though I let on to you I didn't. If he'd married you, I would have killed myself. That was no bluff. But he's free, and when he comes back to find me where I ought to be, and with his child in my arms, a beauty,

why, then—but I ain't going to rub it in. Lord! what a beast you must think me. For you're a real good sort. When I'm not hating you, I love you, there! If you was anybody else, I'd worship you, but I've had to fight for my own hand. Now you'd better get out o' this. We sha'n't meet again. I tell you you're a sight too good for Dick or any other man I've known. And you've saved two lives—one may be worth damn little, but the other—who knows?"

Her voice had rung changes on all the emotions. Pride, scorn, pathos, misery, and, at the end, with the last two words, triumph. Nevertheless, Dorothy knew that the speaker was weaving ropes out of sand. If she became the greatest singer and actress of her generation, if her child was a cherub of loveliness, Gasgoyne would not change. He had never loved Crystal, he never would love her.

"Ain't you ever goin'?"

"Not till you tell me your plans."

"My plans? Oh, that's easy. I'm going to stick to my job as long as I can. I've money put by, thanks to you. I'm all right—strong and hopeful. It's only in the mornings and when I'm overtired at rehearsals that I get blue. To-day I was miserable. I lay here feeling horrid, and thinking that I'd lose my billet, lose my looks, lose everything. See?"

"I see. But you're better already."

"I'm quite myself. I shall eat a bit of breakfast. I have treated you shameful, but even that can't take away my appetite. Ain't I a beast? Say I am. Hit me, if you like. I won't hit back. Only, for God's sake, say something—anything."

"If you wish me to say 'good-by—'"

"You make me squirm, you do." She writhed in the bed, unable to bear the forgiveness and pity in Dorothy's eyes.

"I shall come to you, if you will have me."

"You?"

"Yes. You must have somebody. I should like to come."

"You're too good. You'll die young, you will. Don't you feel the wings sprouting? Come to me, will you? Well, look here. I don't want to see you ever again. I shall see your face, as I see it now, as long as I live—it'll fair haunt me—yes, it will. But I hold you to your bargain. As long as I keep myself decent, you won't marry Dick, and you won't write to him, or see him till the year is up?"

"That is understood," said Dorothy coldly. She turned to leave the room, glad to think that she would never enter it again—and yet, in some strange way, sorry for its inmate, who lived not in it at all, but in some enchanted palace of her imagination built of nothing more substantial than a fond woman's hopes.

"Yes, you'll stick to that, I know."

She spoke admiringly, but grudgingly, possibly contrasting her own code of honor with Dorothy's.

"Good-by," said Dorothy gently. She came back to the bed and held out her hand. "Remember, Crystal, if you should want me, I'll come."

"Why should I want you?"

"I dare say you'll get along capitally without me. Indeed, I'm sure you will."

"No, you ain't. At this moment you're sorrier for me than you ever

was before, and why?" She asked the question fiercely.

The tears stood in Dorothy's eyes, but she held them back. In silence she stretched out her hand. To her amazement, the strange creature in the bed seized it, kissed it, held it to her bosom, and then flung it away with a bitter laugh.

"If I hadn't kissed it, I should have bitten it," she declared. "I do hate you worse than ever, because you make me feel such a beast."

For answer, Dorothy bent down, and put her arms round the poor, passion-torn body.

"You don't hate me," she whispered, "and you're not a beast. I admire you, because I know how you feel exactly. You can't deceive me, Crystal, but it is plucky indeed of you to try. And whatever happens I am your friend. I go now only because you send me away. When you want me, I shall come back. Perhaps you will write; let me know how you get on in the new company. I shall write to you and send you my address in France. Crystal, you have taught me more than I ever knew before."

"It ain't much wonder Dick left me for you," Crystal sobbed. "Well, you've downed me. I swore you shouldn't, but you have."

TO BE CONTINUED.



THE LILY

O'ERSHADOWED by the mountain's rocky wing,
Till all her haven was continual night,
I found a lily, lucent-eyed and white,
Cool-bowered in the margin of a spring.

A broad the sunlight flashing on the plain
Had flung the flaming poppies near and far,
But, native to the shadow like a star,
It was the lily healed my travel-pain.

Art sad, dear heart? Dost long for that bright glade?
Now closed and barred, with scarlet poppies rife?
Nay, look along the lowland of thy life,
And see God's lilies in its deepest shade.

MARGARET HOUSTON.

The IRRESISTIBLE FORCE

By JACQUES FUTRELLE

JOHN NORWOOD was the irresistible force of Wall Street. A word from him was a bellowing, devastating, withering simoom which roared and raged up and down the Street, crumbling financial institutions like paper. Once he had been good-natured, even genial, with a general sort of faith in erring humanity—not enough to interfere with his commercial projects, but still a faith. Then he found out that he had a liver. From that moment he was settled in the conviction that every man's hand was against him. He crushed his way through life—overrode circumstances by the harrowing force of a powerful individuality.

Now John Norwood had a project. A railroad obstructed it. That road immediately became a thing to smash. Norwood gave the order through a broker with whom he had never before had dealings. It was not desirable that it should go through his own broker. That might lead to conjecture. Conjecture might lead to anything.

"Now, see here," he had told the broker, "there's a jerk-water railroad out here, the K. L. & M. It's one of those roads where they have a semi-occasional schedule, and their limited trains wait for picnic-parties. They call 'em 'fast trains' because you starve to death before you get anywhere to eat. That road's in my way."

"I understand," said the broker.

"I'm going to build a real railroad out there," continued Norwood; "one

of those that'll make the natives sit up and think they're in the United States. Double tracks, a train service that hits the high spots, and all that sort of thing. But I don't want any opposition. Understand?"

"I think so."

"Now get the K. L. & M.—full control, a working majority of the shares. I don't care how you get it, but get it. Don't worry me with details. And say, don't under any circumstances let it be known that I want it. Last time I was in a railroad deal I got nipped to the tune of half a million."

"You mean when Stanton beat you?"

"Yes, confound him!" said Norwood, and the light which sent a shiver up and down the Street glowed in his eyes. "Then he had to go and die before I got a chance to get even with him. I don't suppose, however, he did that purposely."

"It would seem to be stretching the point some," admitted the broker.

"Well, that's all," said Norwood.

Then the irresistible force went home to dinner.

When it is said that John Norwood was the irresistible force of Wall Street, it must be understood that that applied only to the Street. In his own home it was a different proposition. Mazie, his daughter, was the dominating force there. Mazie was twenty. She had a haze of gold-bronze hair and eyes reflecting the splendor of the sky. Engulfed by her wiles Norwood blustered, raged, roared—and yielded to her capricious will. He always fought valiantly, knowing he would lose. He had been doing it for a long time; he was accustomed to it.

Mazie met him in the hall on this particular day.

"Papa," she said, "some one is coming to see you this evening, about—about—"

"About what?" demanded Norwood. He had an uneasy feeling that he was going to lose something—he didn't know what yet.

"About me," continued Mazie.

"What about you?" blustered Norwood.

"Well, I suppose every girl has to fall in love some time," said Mazie "and I—I have."

"You? You? In love? You? Well!"

"I sha'n't tell you who it is," said Mazie placidly. "But he will come here this evening to see you, and ask for—for me—I mean ask for me to—to keep—to have and to hold, as it were."

John Norwood snorted. For the moment—one of the rare occasions of his life—he had nothing to say. It was incredulous, positively unbelievable, his daughter—his—John Norwood's—with everything on earth that a girl could possibly wish for—wanting to get married! Why—

"Of course, papa, I love you more than anybody in the world," Mazie continued, "but I love him, too, oh, so much. I don't want you to think that—that I am ungrateful or anything horrid. It's so queer to love somebody else, and want to see him all the time. But I suppose every one has it some time."

"Yes, like the measles," said Norwood. It was an attempt at a bluster, but he didn't feel blustery. If it had been only something else, something of no consequence, something which merely required money, why, it would have been a simple matter. Then he would have roared and raged and blustered, and given it to her. But this—

"Every one has one supremely happy moment," Mazie went on, "and mine was when I knew he loved me. You and mother were happy—give me the same happiness you had."

And John Norwood, looking fiercely

over the gold-bronze head at an old master hanging opposite—a treasure of art—saw through it, on into the past; saw the girl he had loved, poor—they were both poor then—saw that same gold-bronze hair, those same blue eyes, that same sweet mouth, and the irresistible force blinked savagely to keep the moisture back. Oh, well, his money had been made to give his daughter every happiness she should crave, and it was not in him to refuse her the one great happiness beside which all things else were trivial and commonplace. He was silent for a long time, and Mazie, confident, snuggled in his arms.

"I suppose everybody gets it," he said finally. "If you think you will be happy with him, whoever he is, and he's all he should be, I will—well, I sha'n't object very much. I hope I can give my consent."

"You will give it?" asked Mazie.

"I haven't said that," Norwood corrected, with a gentle smile. "But perhaps another member of the family—family, I like that—might be welcome here. Of course you'll have to live here with me, you know?"

"Oh, I hope—I hope you'll like him," said Mazie.

Wall Street would have been paralyzed. John Norwood sentimental? Why, it was absurd!

Mazie sat on the top of the long hall stairs with a little wrinkle in her brow, and wondered vaguely which, if either, of the two men in the library would come out alive. She could hear voices, and occasionally one of them rose violently.

Finally she heard the library door open, then an angry tramp across the hall, and the front door slammed. Instantly the library door crashed and the hall rattled. Mazie glided down the stairs, peered into the library, then entered.

"Well?" she asked quietly of her father.

"Well?" he roared at her. "No, it isn't well. That man—that imperti-

nent young ass, had the—the unspeakable—unspeakable——”

“Nerve,” Mazie helped him.

“Audacity to—ask for your hand in marriage. Why, the—the——”

“Now, papa, don’t get excited just before dinner,” said Mazie.

“I’ll get excited if I want to,” Norwood bellowed. “Why, it’s simply maddening to have that impudent young—young scoundrel even think for a moment—even think, I say, of marrying you.”

He whacked the table before him viciously with his closed fist.

“I take it that you told him so?” said Mazie.

“Yes, I did tell him so. And I never will give my permission for you to marry him, young lady. You in love with him! Why in the world couldn’t you have picked out some other man—any other man in the world—even a bu’sted duke or a lord or a count or a baron—anything on earth but just that one man?”

“Because he was the man I wanted,” said Mazie. She didn’t seem half-way broken-hearted.

“Didn’t you know of all the men who ever lived, that particular one, Dick Stanton, and his father before him, were the men I especially did not like? Didn’t you know it, I say?”

And again the table rocked under a thundering smash.

“Yes, I knew it,” said Mazie sweetly.

“And still you’re in love with that—that—why didn’t you tell me?”

“Because I knew you wouldn’t like it,” and Mazie smiled charmingly.

“Why, the little nincompoop”—the eruption continued.

“He’s six feet two,” said Mazie.

“Well, the big nincompoop,” roared Norwood, “fiddles away all his time at pink teas, and green luncheons, and blue receptions, and red Germans, and things. Now if he’d only been a man, a man with—with stuffing in him—muscle and bone and head—one of the kind that can knock the tar out of things.”

“He played center at Yale,” said Mazie.

“Yes, probably fiddled away all his time at football, and never looked in a book.” Norwood was determined to find a fault. “I’ll bet he hasn’t enough in his head to fill a—a peanut.”

“He graduated with first honors,” said Mazie.

“Yes, I always knew there were a lot of fools running these colleges—to let a—a—thing like that get through with first honors. Why—why, Mazie, how could you ever fall in love with such a—a—an ugly——?”

“He’s considered one of the handsomest men in New York,” said Mazie.

“Handsome?” raged Norwood. “He hasn’t one redeeming thing about him.”

“I think he has,” said Mazie.

“Actually poor! You’d spend everything he has in a year.”

“He has as much money as you have,” said Mazie.

“Well, what if—he has? How’d he get it?” roared Norwood. “How did he get it? By his father’s speculation. That’s how he got it.”

“Well, he doesn’t speculate, papa.”

“No, he hasn’t enough brains. Never earned a cent in his life—he couldn’t if he tried. He’s—he’s——”

“Very nice,” said Mazie. She hadn’t even begun to lose hope yet.

“And—and he isn’t—isn’t honest,” declared Norwood, somewhat hesitatingly. The Wall Street glitter came into his eyes, and his voice lost its rant.

“Not honest?” gasped Mazie, and a sudden pain appeared in her face. “Why, papa!”

“No, he isn’t honest.” Norwood was blustering again. “At least his father wasn’t.”

Mazie’s face was anxious now.

“No,” thundered Norwood. “His father robbed me of half a million dollars, years ago. Robbed me, I say, and—and then died before I got a whack at him. Now, every time I see this young Stanton—Dick Stanton—silly name for a man, anyhow!—I want to choke him until he gives me back every cent of it.”

"How did he rob you, papa?" Mazie's voice was low and tense.

"There I was," said Norwood, "working day and night, straining every nerve to get some railroad bonds—wearing my life out—and old Stanton had to come into it. I had made my bid for the bonds, they were gilt-edged, and it seemed certain I would get them, when what did old Stanton do? What did he do, I say? He got next to the directors, found out what my bid was, and overbid me—overbid me, young lady. And then what did he do? He got them, and I didn't know it until the bonds were delivered."

Mazie didn't follow such financial intricacies, but she was not discouraged.

"As I understand it," she said, "when he got the bonds you lost half a million dollars?"

"Yes," blurted the irresistible force, "and it was a—was robbery." He felt that his argument was not a sound one, even to himself.

"And if you had got the bonds, Mr. Stanton would have lost half a million dollars?"

"Well, something like that," Norwood confessed. He felt his contention crumbling about his ears. "But it was underhanded—every time he got a chance he would do those things to me, and it wasn't honest."

Mazie burst out laughing. It was a delight to hear her laugh. It was a ripple with a gurgling catch in it.

"And I told this young Stanton so just now," continued Norwood. He felt the earth slipping away from him. "I told him that his father wasn't honest, and—and—"

"Well, what happened?"

"He—he said if I hadn't been your father, he would have hit me in the nose."

Mazie laughed again.

"He said he was honest, and I told him the best way to prove it would be to let you alone. You are only twenty now, and in a couple of years, if you want to—want to throw yourself away on him, why, I sha'n't object. Mean-

while, I was thinking I might buy you a duke or something. But for two years I am going to run this thing myself. Do you understand? He has promised to let you absolutely alone for that long."

"Did he promise that?" asked Mazie. She wasn't very happy now.

"He didn't want to," said Norwood, "but I made him."

"Well, we—we could run away, you know, papa."

"I know you could," roared Norwood; "and that would prove just what I said of him—that he isn't honest. That would prove it."

"Of course I'm not going to run away," said Mazie; "but, papa, I don't think you ought to let a personal prejudice interfere with my happiness."

"Personal prejudice, bosh!" said Norwood. "Personal prejudice? Why, I never allowed personal prejudice to interfere with me in my life. If he's all you say he is, let him show it to me. Let me see what's in him. He'll have plenty of opportunity in two years."

"Two years is such a long, long time." And Mazie sighed dolefully.

"It's not half as long before marriage as it is afterward," said Norwood. He didn't believe it, but it had a good sound. Besides, he felt that he could be sarcastic now. He had regained the mastery. Having regained it, he looked at Mazie a long time.

"Couldn't blame any darned fool for falling in love with her," he said to himself.

Then he sat down to dinner. Dinner was an event in his life. He never frivoled, nor wasted time or space on trivial things. The irresistible force had an appetite like a laborer in a lumber-camp.

Next day began John Norwood's most famous fight in the Street. Of the ten thousand shares of K. L. & M., the Westinghouse interests owned four thousand nine hundred and eighty-seven, just fourteen less than control. Naturally, they had the directorate, and, being in possession, they were

satisfied. The K. L. & M. paid a couple of million a year; this was fifteen per cent. on the original investment. Their administration had been wise, economical, and lucrative. The price of the stock was above par.

But a couple of days later the Westinghouse interests awoke to the fact that some one else had a hand on the pulse of the road. It dawned on them suddenly, when the price, already high, jumped. They immediately began an investigation, and found, to their consternation, that a broker representing an unknown had quietly bought up K. L. & M. at a greatly advanced price, and now held four thousand nine hundred and eighty-three shares. The Westinghouse people were scared. They hustled about, and found that thirty outstanding shares were in the hands of an old client. They went to this client, whom they alone knew, and asked to buy at any price. The client refused to sell; would consider no offer from them or any one else. Further, if any attack was made on the road, this client promised to vote with the Westinghouses, thus allowing that firm to retain control.

Feeling somewhat reassured, the Westinghouse interests sat still and held tight. They felt that disaster could not come as long as they did that. Then Norwood's broker went to report.

"Well?" demanded Norwood.

"There are ten thousand shares of K. L. & M.," the broker began. "Of these, I have bought four thousand nine hundred and eighty-three for you."

"Well, that isn't control," said Norwood. "I want control."

"There are four thousand nine hundred and eighty-seven shares held by the Westinghouse interests," the broker continued placidly. "They own them absolutely, and refuse to sell at any price."

"Well, I know all that," Norwood blustered impatiently.

"The other thirty shares are controlled, though not owned, by the Westinghouse people," the broker went on.

"Who owns 'em?" demanded Norwood.

"I don't know, and can't find out," said the broker.

"Can't find out, eh? Can't find out?" Norwood roared at the broker, as he looked him up and down carefully, minutely, scornfully. "Can't find out? You call yourself an up-to-date business man, and can't find out who owns thirty shares of K. L. & M.?"

"You couldn't find out yourself," said the broker. He was nettled. It is not comforting to one man to have another look him over as he would a prize pig.

"Find out!" thundered Norwood. "Certainly I can find out. Find out anything."

"Where I have failed no man in the Street can find out," said the broker.

"Oh, bosh," said Norwood. "Do you mean to say there's not a man in the Street with enough brains to find out who owns those thirty shares?"

"Guess that's right," said the broker.

"Well, I'll find out," bellowed Norwood. "Thirty measly little shares of stock, and can't find out. Why, I'll find out, and I'll swamp somebody if they don't look out." There was danger in Wall Street when Norwood's under jaw protruded at just that angle. "Make a bluff," he went on. "Go into the Street and announce publicly that John Norwood wants those thirty shares of K. L. & M. That ought to scare somebody into giving 'em up."

The broker obeyed orders. The Westinghouse people grew pale. One of the firm rushed to see the client who held the thirty shares. The client listened, reiterated a refusal to sell, smiled, and said it would be all right. The Westinghouses, reassured, then began an active campaign of sitting still and holding tight. The strain was awful.

Meanwhile the Street waited patiently for the end of the world. John Norwood had spoken. Finally the broker again went to Norwood.

"It won't work," he reported. "It might have some result if you would appear personally in the matter. I simply can't find out who owns those

shares. I have had the best detectives in the Street investigating."

Norwood smiled. It was an indulgent, pitying smile, the sort of smile that conscious strength gives.

"I'll take an hour or so this afternoon and go out myself and get those shares," he said.

Then the irresistible force met the immovable body. The impact was terrific. Norwood's "hour or so" brought no result. He bellowed a challenge up and down the Street; threatened, blustered, raved, and—learned nothing. For a week he butted the impossible. His roar reverberated and drove the weaklings to cover, but it had no result to himself. Then he hired spies, bribed employees, bought the active support of a gentleman of talent who entered the Westinghouse offices at night and sought to find out something. Still he was helpless. The Street failed to wither. It looked on with a deep and unflagging interest, but it didn't get excited. In fact, it drew a long breath of relief to see Norwood engrossed in the trivial pursuit of thirty shares of K. L. & M. He was allowing other things to pass unmolested.

More deliberately, with less of bluster, with more care as to detail, he began the search all over again. He thought once of openly attacking the Westinghouse interests in the market, but they had anticipated such a move, and had fled to cover. They merely held K. L. & M., but they held it grimly.

At the end of a week John Norwood's effort to get the thirty shares of K. L. & M. had become a point of honor with him—a serious, glaring failure in a life which heretofore had not known failure. At the same time, it had become a joke in the Street. Brokers laughed at it, but Norwood went doggedly on. It was this trait of tenacity which had won success for him before, and now the cause had become a vital issue.

"I'll crush him to powder," he repeated.

"When you find him," said the broker.

"Guess the old man's losing his grip," said Wall Street, and it chortled as it made a grab at some of Norwood's unprotected stocks and got away with them.

"Losing my grip, am I?" growled Norwood when he heard. "Wait until I finish this job, and I'll wipe Wall Street as clean as a ballroom floor with those chaps."

In another fortnight, Norwood began to realize that he was bucking a stone wall. He began to feel, for the first time, that there was a possibility of failure. He saw that a man who can negotiate hundred-million-dollar loans for the government, merge railroads, steamships, steel interests, copper bonanzas, who held the financial interests of the country in his open hand, was not always victorious if he happened to have a man against him who could not be frightened. If he could only learn who held the shares. But he couldn't. Then, although he would hardly confess the fact, but it was true, he developed a certain admiration for the unknown.

Then a great coup was planned against Norwood. The Westinghouse people, in retaliation, conceived the idea of raiding Steel, and formed a great pool to back them. Norwood held millions of Steel. It was just at this psychological moment that Norwood, in a towering rage, received a card as he sat at his desk. The card bore the name: "Mr. Richard Stanton." Norwood looked at it, and the world turned red.

"If he asks me for my daughter's hand again, I'll throw him out the window," he declared. "Let him come in."

Mr. Richard Stanton entered.

"Well?" thundered Norwood.

"I came in to see you, Mr. Norwood," Stanton began calmly, "not because of any admiration I have for you personally, but because of my regard for—for another member of your family."

"Now don't go over all that again," said Norwood. "I've heard it once. You've given me your promise, and I won't release you from it."

"I know that," said Stanton. "If

you'll permit me to sit down, I think I may be able to tell you something in which you will be interested."

"Well, sit down, then," said Norwood. It was not a courteous invitation, but Stanton, being a calm young man, sat down.

"There is a plan afoot to raid your Steel holdings," Stanton continued.

"A what?" demanded Norwood. He was interested.

"A pool has been formed to smash you in Steel, and unless you act quickly it may succeed."

"To smash me, eh?" And Norwood's under jaw shot out fiercely. "To smash me. Uh, huh! And who's in it?"

"That I can't tell you," said Stanton. "I know there is such a plan, and I am merely telling you because I know, if it succeeds, you will be ruined. It is enough to let you know that it is coming. You can save yourself."

John Norwood sank back into his chair, his eyes half-closed, his mind far away, trying out his defenses, his fortifications, thinking over all things connected with his Steel holdings. For a full minute he sat thus, and gradually the fierce jaw retired to its normal position. Then his eyes fell to Stanton. Again he was aggressive.

"Why do you tell me this?" he demanded. "To make yourself solid with me, I suppose?" He was sneering.

"You flatter yourself, Mr. Norwood," said Stanton, and his face flushed. "I learned of the coming raid through an invitation to join the pool against you, and I have no desire to see the father of the girl I love ruined."

Norwood went over and stood looking out of the window a long time. Then he turned back to Stanton.

"I think—I think it's damned decent of you, Stanton," he said. "I appreciate it, and I thank you. Perhaps I—" He extended his hand.

"Pray don't feel under any obligation," said Stanton, and there was a slight touch of irony in his voice. "You can protect yourself, and—and I wish you good day."

"Wait a minute," said Norwood.

"Sit down a minute. You know I feel like you've made a monkey of me, somehow." He laughed uneasily. "Since that time you called at my house, I've been pretty busy with another matter, and perhaps I have neglected my affairs somewhat—my Steel, I mean. I've been chasing thirty shares of a railroad stock, and let everything else go. And I didn't get the stock, at that."

"No?" Stanton was politely interested.

"I want you to know that I appreciate what you have done in tipping me off to this raid. And yet I'm afraid you won't believe me," continued Norwood. "By the way"—and the Wall Street king became the man of business again—"you don't happen to know who holds an odd thirty shares of K. L. & M., do you?"

"Yes, I know," replied Stanton.

"What?" Norwood gasped. "You know?"

And just at that moment the door was flung open, and Mazie, charming in gray, ran into the room.

"Oh, papa," she exclaimed, and then, at sight of Stanton, a startled "My goodness! What's the matter?"

"Nothing's the matter," said Stanton. He smiled gravely at her astonishment.

"I was over at Staten Island, and was just driving by," said Mazie. "If I'm in the way—"

"Would you mind telling me who holds those shares?" Norwood asked of Stanton. After the interruption of her entrance, he had forgotten that Mazie was on earth.

"Not in the least," said Stanton.

"Well, who then?" Norwood continued. He was on the verge of victory.

"I hold them."

Norwood gazed at Stanton a moment, and rage came into his face. Then he turned and walked to the window, where he stood for a moment, as Mazie questioningly looked from one man to the other. Finally Norwood turned back. His hands were trembling with anger, and his face fright-

ened Mazie. Stanton stood looking at him curiously. When Norwood spoke, his voice was husky, tense. It was the suppressed roar of the lion about to leap.

"You hold them," he began. "You, like your father before you, have tried to ruin my plans. You have made me the laughing-stock of the Street. You have seen men who used to pale when they spoke to me sneer at the 'old man who was losing his grip.' You have seen my business honor at stake. You have done all this, and yet you have had the—the audacity to hope for my daughter's hand in marriage."

"I was under no obligation whatever to you," said Stanton easily. "I was satisfied to hold my shares. The Westinghouse people were friends of my father's, and are friends of mine. I had no object in throwing the shares into your hands to ruin the Westinghouse interests, as I knew you had planned. And besides, I was never asked by you or by any of your agents if I held the shares, or if I would sell them."

"Would you sell them?" asked Norwood.

"No," said Stanton.

"At ten thousand a share?"

"No," said Stanton.

"At twenty thousand?"

"No, not at fifty thousand."

"I'll ruin you for this; ruin you!" thundered Norwood.

"You can't do that," said Stanton quietly. "Every cent I have, beyond these shares, is either in real estate, cash, or in United States gold bonds. However, I was going to say, that if the thirty shares I hold will be of any service to you, I am perfectly willing to allow you to vote them."

Norwood sank down into a chair with his head in his hands. He sat thus for a long time, and Mazie's soft hand strayed over the iron-gray hair lovingly. She did not understand. She merely knew that the two men whom she loved above all the world had reached a crisis in their relations. Finally Norwood arose.

"I rather guess I'm taking this thing too seriously," he said, and the strain in his voice had gone. "It seems I am being placed under more obligations to you every moment. I can only thank you again, and—apologize for some things I have said about you—things you did not know of."

"There is one thing I should like to ask," said Stanton, "and that is, when you vote my shares, and they will give you control of K. L. & M., that you buy in the Westinghouse interests at the market price, and, if you think the shares a good investment, hold them for me until—until—for two years. I hope to make a settlement of that amount on my wife."

"I will protect Westinghouse," said Norwood. "But the K. L. & M. isn't worth a darn as an investment. I'll recommend something along that line later. Fact is, I'm going to wipe K. L. & M. off the earth." For the second time he shook Stanton's hand. "But understand, this makes no difference about my daughter. You are prepared to keep your promise to let her alone for two years?"

"I am," said Stanton. "Good day."

He turned, and the door closed behind him. Mazie stood looking after him a moment, perplexed, sorrowful, then she ran to her father.

"Father," she said, "what is it? What's the matter?"

"I was just thinking, little girl," said Norwood, as his arm slipped about her, and the quizzical smile she loved came to his lips; "I was just thinking that that young fellow would make a blamed good business partner for me."

"Oh, papa!" said Mazie.

"And that it might be a good idea to have him up to dinner to-night."

"Oh, papa!"

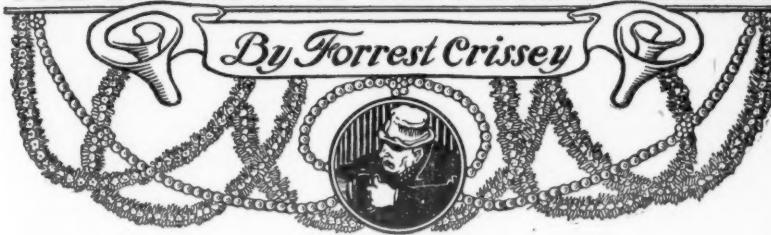
"And that it doesn't take so long to get a trousseau if one is willing to pay enough."

"Oh!" Mazie was beyond speech. She was weeping.

And the irresistible force swept onward.

THE INCIDENT OF THE PEARL NECKLACE

By Forrest Crissey



FURN" FREELING was a man with a specialty, and had a specialist's pride in the superiority and selectiveness of the particular line of burglarizing which he had elected to follow. In a way, he looked upon all members of his shady craft who did "general work" as blunderers, lacking the wit, the initiative, and the nice discrimination to see an original and interesting phase of work and to develop it to a high point.

Then, too, there were several other reasons for his feeling of conscious superiority over his professional fellows. He was a college man—and the fraternity-pin which he usually wore was the one example of the goldsmith's art in his possession for which he had paid clean coin, and to which he had undisputed claim. He was too shrewd not to recognize the imprudence of wearing anything which might serve to catch the eye, and thus to impress the mind of any with whom he might come in contact "in the course of business"; but his pride in the emblem and in what it signified gave him a daredevil joy in wearing it freely. He "handled" hundreds of gems, jewels, and precious trinkets, but he would not have foregone the satisfaction of wearing his simple "frat"-pin for the privilege of safely displaying the finest solitaire that had ever come within the grasp of his skilful fingers. It was his

—honestly his—and so was all that it stood for.

There was still another matter in which Freeling was also inclined to feel his professional oats after the manner of the specialist in other lines. He believed that it was far "higher practise" to use his wits than his hands; he had never in his life, even at the very outset of his "career," found it necessary to descend to violence, and gradually he had come into the habit of playing the game of thievery with a view to seeing how little of physical effort of any kind he could put into it.

At last he found himself in the possession of a distinct specialty, which he defined to his fellow craftsmen, one night, in these words: "You porch-climbers have always considered yourselves the fancy artists in the profession, because you can force a window so quietly as not to disturb the people; but I'd rather do my work in such a way that the lady of the house will voluntarily open the door for me herself, and will invite me to come again when I leave. It's a neater sort of work, and appeals to me more."

Among the men who plied his outlawed and dangerous craft, Freeling was envied for things other than his education, his skill, and his steady nerve. Men in honest walks of life naturally are pleased to find themselves distinguished from their fellows by some point of good looks which will impress even the casual observer, and

be remembered. But these touches of personal distinction are not coveted by the burglar, or by any member of the underworld whose ambition is to be completely forgotten by all who may see them. Freeling was counted fortunate, in the eyes of his fellows, in possessing a face so completely commonplace as to have not a single distinguishing trait in the sight of the average stranger.

His countenance was neither handsome nor homely, keen nor dull, coarse nor refined; it was simply commonplace and hopelessly forgetable.

Freeling roomed with the family of a clergyman—the pastor of a struggling church—and represented himself to be a real-estate broker and renting-agent. He quietly disclaimed any particular religious convictions, but occasionally attended the services, and even the social functions, of the little church presided over by the Reverend Doctor Shilling. Freeling's habits were quiet, and his life apparently exemplary; he was, as the pastor's wife expressed it, "just an ideal roomer," because it was almost impossible to tell whether he was in the house or not, and so it made little difference, either way. His bedroom being on the ground floor of the cottage, and accessible from the porch entrance, it was almost literally true that Mrs. Shilling seldom knew, without special investigation, whether he was at home or not.

The only thing in his colorless personal habits which attracted the attention of the pastor's wife was the fact that he regularly received most of the morning newspapers, and spent considerable time in scrutinizing the small ads of the "rent" pages. In view of his statement that he was in the renting and real-estate business, this seemed to her not only natural, but a commendable proof of his industry and attention to business. She knew, in fact, that he had enabled two or three of the people in the church, who had made his acquaintance at sociables, to find better quarters through his agency.

As usual, on one particular April morning, the quiet roomer was scan-

ning the "small-ad" column of the *Tribune*; but on this occasion his face lighted up with a smile of more than usual animation.

"That looks good to father," he remarked to himself as he cut from the paper an advertisement reading:

Richly furnished apartment of eight rooms—must rent at once for the summer. Starting for Europe in three days. Terms reasonable to the right party. Bachelor or couple without children preferred. Call and inspect.

It was signed W. H. Weatherall. The address given was that of a fashionable apartment building overlooking Lincoln Park, and within ten minutes' ride from the little parsonage.

"Mighty kind of 'em to give the name, too," he muttered, reaching for the volume called "Who's Who in Chicago" which occupied the place of honor on his modest table by the side of a set of "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes." He had excused his liking for the latter books, in speaking with Mrs. Shilling, on the ground that he found them "so immensely humorous." She later read the books, and failed to understand how he could consider them as humorous, although they were the most exciting stories she had ever allowed herself to read since her marriage.

His handy volume gave him, at a glance, the information that Mr. Wiloughby Hyde Weatherall was a person of social importance, a member of the leading clubs, a yachtsman, and a lover of good horses. A dip into the city directory was equally satisfactory, as it informed him that Mr. Weatherall was in the wholesale jewelry business.

"If I don't get good picking there," was his mental comment, "it'll be because the lady of the house is uncommonly careful."

To the maid who answered his ring at the Weatherall door-bell he said:

"I've called in answer to the advertisement about renting the apartment."

"Step in, please," was the answer. "Mrs. Weatherall will see you in the library."

She appeared promptly, and the keen

eyes of the caller at once made note of the fact that she was a pretty woman, evidently a little immature, and perhaps a bit flighty and unsystematic in her habits.

"My home is in Philadelphia," he explained, "but I am making improvements in certain Chicago property which has been in the family a long time, and the necessity of overseeing this work will keep me here until fall, I regret to say. I have only my mother now, and she is so unhappy at the thought of being left alone, that I have finally decided to bring her out here, so that she may be with me. I understand Chicago is not so bad in summer."

"We have the breeze direct from the lake," was Mrs. Weatherall's answer, "and I can assure you that it makes our apartment most comfortable. Would you like to go through the rooms?"

"Yes," shortly responded Freeling, "after you tell me what you want for the apartment."

"A hundred and fifty a month."

"That certainly does not seem unreasonable to an Easterner—especially when the taste with which your home is furnished is taken into consideration."

Freeling's pleasantest smile accompanied this comment—and there was something decidedly agreeable about his commonplace face when lighted by the smile which he reserved as a "confidence clincher."

"I presume," he added, "that my local banker, here, will be sufficient as a reference—if I should decide to take the place?"

"Oh! certainly," interrupted Mrs. Weatherall, who was evidently pleased at the ease with which she was carrying off the honors of the negotiations. As he followed into the hall, his plans matured quickly, and he remarked:

"No doubt your kitchen arrangements are first-class."

"We think so," she answered. "But come and see for yourself."

After the kitchen and dining-room had been carefully inspected, the mistress of the house led the way to the

sleeping-rooms, with the remark: "There is one room which I cannot show you until my mother comes out. But here is my own room. I think it very pleasant."

"Delightful!" answered Freeling, as he caught a passing glimpse of an open jewel-case on the antique dressing-table. Coiled against its pale-blue lining was a necklace of pearls which his experienced eye told him was worth several thousand dollars.

He knew that quick action was necessary. Stepping to the window as if to take in the outlook, he said:

"Would you mind asking your cook if she would care to remain with my mother and myself?—I take it for granted she is competent, or else she would not be in your service." A note of quiet imperativeness in his voice and the fact that he glanced at his watch seemed to suggest action instead of conversation, and Mrs. Weatherall at once left the room in the direction of the kitchen.

Instantly his hand flicked the string of pearls from its soft nest and closed the lid of the box, which was left on the dresser. But, as he slipped the necklace into his pocket, he glanced into the mirror of the dressing-table, and saw the reflection of the white face of an elderly woman suddenly withdrawn from a partially open door at the opposite side of the room. Then he heard quick, soft footsteps, and knew that the mother was carrying the news of what she had seen to the other members of the household. A moment later a smiling little girl entered with a doll in her arms and shyly seated herself in a tiny rocker—with an air which plainly said: "I've been told to come in here and sit down until mama comes—but I don't understand why."

Freeling understood, however, and his mental comment was: "Keen old lady, that! But two can play at this game. Yes—there she is at the phone, calling the police."

"Will you ask your mother to speak with me for a moment, little lady?" he said to the child. "I'm late to an appointment and must hurry."

The "little lady," however, sat quietly, stubbornly, in her small chair, made no answer, and continued to play with her doll's clothing.

"Knows her orders, all right," thought Freeling. Then Mrs. Weatherall entered at one door and her mother at another.

"This is my mother, Mrs. Hyde," said the younger woman.

Mrs. Hyde bowed coldly and motioned Freeling to a seat. He took it easily and then turned his best smile upon Mrs. Weatherall.

"Perhaps I'm presuming, for a total stranger," he remarked, "but a certain experience which my mother went through a short time ago has tempted me to—well, to teach you a lesson, Mrs. Weatherall."

His manner was full of easy and delightful assurance as he slipped his hand into his side pocket and continued:

"In spite of my continued warnings, my mother would leave her jewels about her chamber, and, one day, a fellow posing as a telephone inspector made way with a diamond pin given her by my father—an heirloom of considerable intrinsic value and especially prized for its associations. It has never been recovered, and she is inconsolable. I observed that you are quite as careless as she, but I hope that this experience will effectually cure you—for it will show you what might have happened."

As he drew the necklace from his pocket, and, with a steady hand, dropped it into the trembling palm of the young matron, the elderly woman exclaimed:

"But—but—I've—*called the police*. I saw you take it. Oh! what shall we do? I hear the police now."

"Just tell them that you had missed the jewels, and thought a servant had taken them—but that they turned up all right a few moments ago. All a mistake!"

Then Freeling took from the table a current magazine and leaned back comfortably in the bedroom rocker. The

officers were received in the library, and the explanation that he had suggested was given in detail, and readily accepted by the officers, who took their departure without asking any disagreeable questions. When the women again returned to the room, the older one exclaimed:

"Goodness! but wasn't it fortunate that I didn't have time to go into details over the phone. All I could say was to 'send some officers quick,' and give our number."

"Yes," genially answered Freeling. "It certainly was lucky. Perhaps I'd have been the one to get the lesson for my presumption, if you'd gone into the situation more fully. Anyhow, I'll know better than to attempt any benevolent pranks again."

"And you may be sure," interrupted Mrs. Weatherall, "that I shall never again be careless about my jewels."

When Freeling left the apartment, a few minutes later, he had arranged to rent it for the season. His references were written upon the engraved card of a Philadelphia gentleman who had lost a diamond ring and a valuable watch—not to speak of a handsome card-case—a year before.

"That's about the closest call I ever had," Freeling remarked to himself as he made his way back to the little parsonage. "If those people weren't in such a hurry to get off to Europe, they might wake up and make me trouble."

At about noon he intercepted a telegraph messenger-boy on the street, handed him a message and a half-dollar, saying:

"Keep the change, son, and hurry on with that wire. It's rush."

When Mrs. Weatherall received it her face clouded, as she read:

Just received message stating serious illness of mother. Cannot take apartment.

"I'm sorry," commented Mrs. Weatherall. "He seemed such a nice, kindly man. And I did want to show Harry that I could let the apartment just as well as he could."

The BOOK LADY



By Will Irwin

THE rattle and jar of the trucks that form in procession along the streets of lower New York, rose as if from an alien world to the metal shutters of the Courbet warehouse; for its echoing cavern was no longer a depository for merchandise, guarded by a surly night watchman; it had become a private library, in charge of Lawrence Hurley, a man with the brow of a scholar, yet with shoulders rather athletic and lips rather humorous—an entirely congruous figure among the treasures of dead and gone bibliophiles.

Lawrence read:

For indeed, God created woman for our joy and also that we might be plagued, since that lasting ease be not the lot of man, and the more he be plagued, so, often, the more is he like the angels. Even so, saith the learned Vintellus, woman serveth the purposes of God, not only by her ministrations, which I have found most sweet and Godly, but even by her plaguing. It seemeth me ever that woman is like to wine; for as God gave us wine that it might make us merry, not that it might make us drunk, so hath he given us woman for gentle joyance: not in madness, as with some, but in all gentleness and sweetness. In my age, so do I testify—

Lawrence closed the book and dropped it on his knee. The covers, as they fell, sent up a cloud of yellow dust from their worm-holes. It was

an old, old volume, "The Booke of Health" entitled; and its title-page showed that it was "Entered at Stationer's Hall MDXCVI." A book bought and treasured when Shakespeare went begging, it had lain on the book-stalls of London with the quartos of "Romeo and Juliet." Now, in the circle of time, that same quarto of "Romeo and Juliet" was locked in the steel vault to his left; a thing so precious that it was kept from the light which might mar one letter of its text. Time had swung half-circle for "The Booke of Health" as well. Its accustomed place, now, was an open place in the unclassified section of the big library, between a humble, unilluminated text of St. Thomas Aquinas and a Nuremberg Chronicle.

About the desk where Lawrence sat, there was only a little circle of light from one electric globe. In the dim, farther reaches of this circle only books were visible. The stacks rose twenty feet to the ceiling of the great room, once a warehouse, now a library; and the place was heavy with the musty scent of dry-rotting covers. From the uniform appearance of the shelves, a bookman could have told that they had been piled in place, more with a view to size than to authors or to periods. Behind the desk stood frames like clothes-horses; and on each of these hung sheepskin rolls, the priceless wisdom of the Hebrew fathers.

The words that he had read revolved in the mind of Lawrence. How that brain of dust had reached to him across the graves and the dead days, to match his own thought! How clearly now could he see the figure of that didactic, superstitious, kindly Kentish physician whose book lay open on his knee! He looked up and down the rows; and a shudder that was neither of fear nor of cold went over him.

So many books! So many figures, the great, the gay, the worthy, embalmed yet living in the dust of his shelves. To him, a solitary among the worm-eaten covers, those figures were beginning to move and to speak. He could imagine Aquinas creeping out from that lower shelf where his "Summa," bound in rough planking, reposed among the other monkish volumes—a bent little man, all head, with a face serene and cold and stern. From that shelf above, where the bound volumes of the *Spectator* lay in the dust, Dick Steele would come forth—fat, broad of brow, jovial of smile, weary of eye. And through the cracks of the vault behind him, would sift vapor and stardust to resolve into the figure whose face he knew so well, but whose play of expression, balanced ever between sadness and mirth, surpassed his imagination—the man mystery of the ages—Shakespeare's self. Lesser figures, too, would form out of the dust and must; the Kentish physician of his evening's reading or the *précieux cavalier*, son of the lute and of spring longing, whose "Problems of Beauty" rested, in strange company, just next to the philosophy of the Schoolmen, done into type by Elzevir in 1486.

Suppose that these, the mighty dead, should come forth upon him in the flesh now? Molière, Cynewulf, Tasso, Luther, Addison—what words would they have for him? Would they ask, when they awoke, what the world had been doing while they lay between clods and covers? Would their genius thrill to progress and science, invention, discovery of the earth's place in the universe, or would they ask only if the world kept sweet and young; if men

still loved and had faith? He tried to imagine what each would ask first—Aquinas of the progress of faith; Tasso perhaps of lovers—he tried even to lift himself to such a height of imagination that he might know what Shakespeare would ask. Would he—

A metal shutter banged somewhere in the distance; and the sound reverberated among the corridors of thick-stacked books. The noise brought him to the earth with a disagreeable jar. It slammed again; and he listened, almost afraid. After a moment, he rose and took the well-remembered way through the darkness, up one aisle and down another.

And now, being out of the radius of the little electric lamp above his own desk, he saw that there was a dim light somewhere in the distance. Its source was hidden by the stacks; its beams made shafts of uncertain radiance to right and left.

"Moonlight," he thought surprised. "I was sure I'd closed that shutter." He hurried his steps and reached that book-stack which looked out on the light. Then his vague fear fell into a gulf of astonishment.

A slanting pillar of white moonlight stretched between the open window and the floor—but there was something in its midst whiter than the moonlight. He paused, started, moved forward a dozen steps. His eyes were clearing now from the veil which light out of darkness had thrown over them; and suddenly he stopped still and rigid, his hand on a book-stack.

The white object appeared to be a woman. Now he saw that it was indeed a woman, reading by moonlight from a little book which rested lightly in the hollow of her palm. The white arm of that hand swept in a superb curve from the floating white which was her gown. With the other hand, she was turning a leaf.

Out of the white gown rose a bare shoulder and a head which drooped with all the grace in the world above her reading. The details of this head he saw only dimly, as his eyes cleared slowly in the moonlight. The hair, he

thought, must be blond, for it glistened dully. Her face was shadow, but he thought that he saw, now and then, the flutter of an eyelash.

She turned one leaf, another and yet another, before the paralysis of astonishment, almost of supernatural terror, had passed from him. Speech was the first faculty which returned. It was only afterward that he remembered with some confusion what he had said:

"Who—oh! who are you?"

At that, she neither started nor looked up, but the white hand which had been turning the pages rose slowly above her head. Her eyes were still on the book, but her arm moved toward the source of light like a lily's petal rising toward the sun. And then—the shutter slammed, and the shaft of moonlight died. The white image shone a moment on his retina; and while the impression lasted, he fancied that he heard a kind of rustling and felt a jar. After that, it was utter blackness.

Although he knew his way by day or night through his book-shelves and could place his hand on the switch controlling the lights, he was so dazed that he fumbled in his vest pocket for his match-safe before venturing forward, and struck a match. By that time, there was nothing in sight but books, books. Regaining his habits, he turned on the electric switch. Still nothing. The iron shutter, it was true, stood unfastened and slightly ajar. Instantly he threw it open and peered out. It was a fifty-foot drop to the back area-way of the warehouse—no possible entrance or exit. Something of terror seized him as he closed the shutter and realized that he was alone with his books and his ghosts. Had he ever really seen this thing?

A sudden sparkle ran over all his nerves. There was something white again—only a spot on the floor, to be sure, but disturbing for the moment. He stepped forward, picked up the white thing; it was tangible; he examined it under the electric light; it was not a ghostly souvenir; he slipped it carefully among the bookish memoranda in his desk drawer.

The next night he made an early dinner at the restaurant below stairs, telephoned a flimsy excuse to break an engagement, and sat, making pretense of reading, far into the night. That afternoon he had found a forgotten Elizabethan play, and had set it aside for the evening's reading; but he took no delight in it. He tried a Spanish picaroon romance; he pulled down a first of "The Voyage to Lisbon"; a packet of English broadsides; a treatise on devils. All were alike to him. For once, books brought no delight to Lawrence the Scholar.

It was not until the next evening, and just when the wholesale district below was settling into its night silence, that the noise of a banging shutter sounded again, setting all his nerves a thrill. This time, he made all speed toward the spot. The shaft of moonlight lay across the floor; again the white figure was there. And as he approached, the woman spoke in a voice deep and low and soft, which sounded through that musty atmosphere of forgotten learning like music in a sepulcher.

"Stop a moment," she said. "I am not ready yet. Oh, stop a moment!"

He paused at about the distance of a book-shelf from her, and—

"Who are you?" he said.

She did not lift her eyes; neither did she answer him quite directly.

"I am finding out who I am. Cannot you help me?" And at that she looked up. Her eyes were in the shadow, yet he imagined that they were beautiful.

"It is so long," she went on, speaking gravely. "So long that they have forgotten me. This critic speaks of so many books—stupid, dull books—and never a word of me."

"And what is the book that you wrote?" he said, although he felt that he was speaking commonplaces.

She laughed lightly, and echoes carried the scintillations of sound away into the darkness and dull shadows.

"I wrote no book," she said, "but a poet loved too much; and there was so much song and longing left to spare

out of his love for the real woman, that he made for his poem the figure of another woman that never was, and yet was. I am she! That is one of the things the poet said," she added. "Only he said it so much better than I!"

"And who was the poet?" asked Lawrence, stepping nearer in his eagerness. With that, she raised her arm, not gently as she had done before, but abruptly. The shutter clicked, the pillar of light died. Again there was rustling sound, and again, when he turned on the light, he was alone. This time there remained not even a spot of white on the floor.

Now, the evenings of Lawrence the Scholar, alone in the Courbet Library, had been mainly evenings of study. That was the purpose for which he had taken service in this great treasure house of lore and learning, closed by the law to all eyes and brains but his. Still, now and then, he had gone out for a dinner with the two or three men whom he knew in that city, strange to him and yet the city of his fathers; or for a visit with the matronly women who had been schoolmates of his mother. Now, however, he became a hermit indeed. Nothing could call him from his desk in the corner of the library. His bedchamber opened through the partition behind his desk; and it was late of nights when Lawrence the Scholar went to bed. Yet he did not hear the signal of the shutter for nearly a fortnight; and his heart grew sick with waiting.

Then, one rainy night and early in the evening, the shutter slammed once more. It was now the dark of the moon, and the window let in only a faint light from the stars and the luminous city. He could see, however, that the woman stood before the opening, that she had her hands clasped before her, and that she carried no book.

"I am ready for you to come near, but not too near," she said. "See, I have put the book aside entirely; I am all of the earth now. Even the spirit of the poet does not hold me, and my blood is warm." She opened to-

ward him the shadows which were her palms.

"I am ready to move a little from the shelves. May I sit and talk with you?" It was said with an ingenuous simplicity which made it all modest and natural.

She was only a figure in outline before him, but she seemed to be holding out one of her hands. All detail was lost in the shadows, and the gestures of this silhouette became a language. So that, when she held out her hand, he saw that she wanted to be led like a child. In and out of the dark passages he took her. The hand in his, warm like a flower in the sun, held his own tightly, yet without a suggestion of familiarity. Try as he would, not a word could he find to say to her; so that, when they came out into the light about his desk, she spoke first:

"The time is short, and you have much to tell me. Why don't you talk?"

He answered her question by another.

"Who was your poet, and what his book?" he asked.

They had reached the desk, and she had sunk, without invitation, into his big armchair, before she answered:

"You opened my book only the other day, and yet you do not know me! Is this what the work of poets comes to? Are their pens and songs of so little worth, that even a scholar does not know us, their creatures, when we come to him from the shelves? Yet he described me well—I think." She laughed, a laugh bantering yet sweet. Her face grew piquant; shadows which were only the ghosts of dimples played about the corners of her mouth. This mouth, red and full, changed always from a rose to a river of roses and back to a rose again. Yet when he looked at her face and called it beauty, he looked for the most part at her brows. In this woman, as he knew then and became conscious afterward, it was her brows—full yet slender, invisibly veined in blue, lined with eyebrows half-arched and pointed—from which all her beauty radiated. He

thought, even then, how like it was to one of those faces of the Middle Ages—Heloise, Rosamond—whose beauty is neither of the Greek time nor yet of our own time.

Her laugh quite dispelled his embarrassment.

"Then it will be a game between you and me," he said. "I will listen to everything you say, in order to discover the style in which you are written. So, then, I may assign you to period and school. I cannot guess from the costume," he added. In fact, the dress which clung and yet floated about her limbs was of no style and of no period. Her hair lay on her neck in a loose knot, and it was fastened with a square pin of curious workmanship. She thrust out a white shoe as she talked. It was not like a modern shoe—more a sandal with a closed top.

"Of what shall I speak?" he asked. "Of what the world has been doing?"

"Oh, I care little for the world, and, besides, I know a great deal. You see, my book is rare and precious. Therefore, we have traveled much. We have been in a king's library, and lain on the shelves at Quarritch's, and crossed seas. We have associated with many volumes, and I have learned much of the new times. And from what I have learned, they are the same times, after all. Those monkish volumes there"—she pointed to the lower shelf where the knowledge of the Schoolmen lay between three-foot deal covers—"they have been shut up in the cloister so long that the world would be new to them. But I—"

"Of what, then, O Lady of Mystery, shall I speak?"

"A man," she said, "is always more interesting than a world or a book, even to a woman who was and yet never was. Suppose you tell me of yourself. Who are you, O keeper of my book, and what are we doing here—so many of us?"

"The books first," he said. "Because they explain me. But have they told you nothing of themselves?"

"The one to my right is always complaining. It is a very severe volume

of Puritan theology. The one on my left is a missal, absorbed in its prayers. My book and I learn nothing from them, because they will have nothing to do with a romance. But come, my time may be short. Of the books first, as you say. Why are there so many here?"

"This," he answered, "is called the Courbet Library, although it is hardly a library at all. Jacques Courbet collected it. He was a very rich man here in the West, and a very powerful one. After he had made his money in mines, he looked about, in his later years, for something upon which to spend it. Although he had little education, he loved learning, for he was a French gentleman by birth. Through all his wanderings, looking for the gold in the earth, he had carried with him a little, old volume of La Fontaine which was his father's. One day, out in his palace on Pacific Heights, he heard how certain men love old books, and an idea came into his mind. He had always done things grandly. That was the secret of his fortune."

Lawrence broke off here and changed his tone as he said:

"I do not know your period, nor your century, not even your country. I may be speaking of things which you do not understand. I have never talked to a book lady before, and I am positively ashamed of your worldly ignorance."

"I will try to understand," she said, leaning forward a little. "Go on."

"So he bought many, many old books. His agents sought them all over the world. Most bibliomaniacs, as you must know from the lore of your shelves, buy just a treasure here and there, as a diamond collector buys only the diamonds of beautiful color. I won't go so far as to say what a treasure he got when he bought you!"

"He collected, not like a connoisseur, but like an Oriental rajah. He bought the library of a Tudor duke. He bought the manuscripts of old monasteries by the thousand. Wherever they were selling old books in the world, his agents were there. He had no place for them—yet. I believe that

there was some idea in his mind of a great building to hold the greatest collection in the world—it was always superlatives with him. While he waited for that, he piled the volumes up in this great warehouse, which belonged to him. And here they are—two hundred thousand of them. Books, some of them, which no scholar's eye has ever seen; palimpsests beyond price locked behind the brush-drawn Latin of old manuscripts for such as me to decipher—and all this treasury is mine alone—as much as though it belonged to me."

"Did he, then, give it to you?" she asked—and here she leaned forward with some interest.

"That is the rest of the story," said he. "One day he died, and Lawrence Hurley—which is I—came to his own. For some of the heirs were not satisfied with the will, and so the estate is in the courts—does a lady out of a book understand courts?—which have sealed the doors of this library by writ and document. Now, for my part: When I left Heidelberg, a lazy American student with just enough income so that I need not work, and just enough conscience so that I felt bound to, I wandered back to the city of my father. I don't know why; my father was dead and my mother lives in Paris, where her income does better. But when I heard that the Courbet Library needed a custodian, one willing to sleep in the place so as to save a watchman, I came, fell in love with the library, and went to work. And, oh! it has been a romance!" he added, bubbling over, for her eyes were kind. "A romance of the mind.

"There isn't a day that I don't find some treasure here—some book which none other than I has really read for centuries. I seem to care no more for people, only for books; and now a woman out of a book has come to me!"

"You know," he added, changing the subject, because he saw that she was a little confused, "I am the only person admitted here. The Courbet heirs are very strict."

She was leaning back in her chair, shading her eyes with her hand.

"Is that all?" she said.

"All?"

"All about you and the library."

"Not quite. There is a little poetic reason in the presence here of me, the only person on the footstool free to enjoy. You see, my father and Jacques Courbet were partners once. Pardon me, won't you, if I talk what we call business to a lady out of a book. They quarreled over the Molly May Mine—it was some such name as that—and Courbet kept the mine while father kept the money. The mine turned out to be richer than Golconda, while the money grew poorer. So one became Jacques Courbet, whom every one envied for his wealth, and the other became the parent of a plain and bookish gentleman on a very plain income. My father always declared that Jacques Courbet knew the value of the mine all the time, and concealed the truth because he wanted everything for himself. If that is true, then you see I have at least an equal right with the heirs who have locked it up, to the Courbet Library." He laughed lightly. She still held her hand before her eyes.

"In all seriousness," he added, "I've really never taken that point of view, nor blamed Courbet. How could I blame a man whose tastes ran so nearly with mine?"

She rose at this. Her face, which had grown grave, held some expression which he could not quite define.

"I must go back to rest between the covers," she said. "I have been out long enough."

"Have I talked of things which did not interest you, Lady of Mystery?" he asked. "In this outer world, you know, one doesn't usually tell all his history to a young woman whom he is meeting for the third time."

"No, I was glad that you spoke as you did," she answered. She had not smiled since he began his tale; all her grave merriment had given way to a certain wistful seriousness. "And you've passed my book every day, as you went dusting down the shelves.

"Will you walk with me to the place where you found me?" She put out her hand again.

"You will come back?" he begged, as they threaded in and out among the shelves. "It will do you good, really, for you must be so very ignorant. Just think, you know nothing but poetry!" They were near the swinging shutter before she answered.

"Yes. I shall rest two nights and come on the third. And, meantime"—there was mischief in her tone—"do you think that you can find the book that I am in? Go back, now, and promise that you will not turn." He watched her flutter away toward the dim light of the window, and turned his back as she bade him. A moment later he heard the shutter, and knew that all the light at his back had gone out.

She came again on the third night, and in the same fashion.

"You were near to losing me the last time," she said as he led her toward his desk. "Do not try to read the riddle. Did you find my book?"

"No—although I looked."

"That is a riddle, too. Do not try to solve it, for the harder you try, the less will you succeed. And yet should you ever find the book, wonderful things would happen." He had seated her now.

Each time that he saw her, he found something new and wonderful to admire. This time it was her hair. He had said that it was blond when he first saw it in the moonlight. But he had not seen the ashen shade of it, nor the way it waved from her perfect throat.

"Beauty died in the world when the poet put you into his book," he said.

"That was one of the things the poet said. It has seemed to me two or three times that you speak like him—when you are at your best." She was drooping back in the chair, one hand hanging, and the poise of her head was mischievous.

"O scholar," she went on. "Since you prefer book people to your people of the outer world, what of the book

women? Have you sweethearts and lights-of-love among them?"

"Perhaps only flirtations," he said. "My taste in book women is critical. I have passed clean over Rosalind and Beatrice and those others who have flirted with every scholar in the world—"

"They've made themselves positively common," she broke in.

"Spoken in excellent modern, colloquial English for a woman out of an old book," said he mischievously.

She arose at this, and her face changed.

"Oh! you're not going away?" he asked, with appeal in his voice.

"We book people," she said, "must be taken in good faith. Perhaps I shall come again. Do not follow me tonight." He called after her, but the white blur in the darkness went steadily on and out of sight.

Yet the next night, after he had waited for an hour between fear and hope, the shutter clicked again. When she had seated herself, she said:

"Tell me, what do you do all day long?"

"I catalogue," he said. "I write your titles and your authors, your dates, conditions, and general remarks, on little, blank cards. Through my days people work in the streets below. I hear the rattle of wagons and the hum of men, but they have come to be an unreal world to me. This is my real world. As I work, I explore. Whenever I make a discovery, I put it aside for my reading in the evening. I've never let my exploring get beyond the limit of my cataloguing. I've saved it all, sipping slowly and holding the glass up to the light. For I'm almost afraid that I can't make this library last through one lifetime!"

"Why don't you put yourself into a book and make yourself one of us, and immortal?" she asked.

"I've tried putting myself into a book," he said. "I scribble; but the weight of these stacks is on that. Of what use is any poor scribbling of mine when so many giants lie here, for-

gotten?" He waved his hand toward the shelves.

"It is curious," he went on, "but only a little before you came I wrote a rhapsody or a fantasy or whatever you want to call it, picturing the immortals coming forth from between the covers, reincarnated. I was thinking of it just when I heard you, there by the shutter. The rhapsody or the fantasy or something is here somewhere—shall I read it to you to show that you have brought me fulfilment?"

"Read it to me when you happen to find it," she said rather quickly, "for I have a proposal for you. Break your rule, not to go beyond your cataloguing—you can surely do that for me, who have come to you out of a book—and let me explore with you. See, I am only a poor, lonely book woman, after all, and I want to know my neighbors. On nights when you least expect it, I will come to you; and you shall take me to your unexplored continents, where we will make discoveries together and learn of your world and mine."

"There is only one meaning to your world and mine—to every world," he said. She dropped her eyes, but her voice had laughter in it when she answered:

"My poet said that, too. Come!"

There was a corner in a far recess of his library which he had passed nearly every day, and yet had never reached with his little cards and his catalogue-cabinet. It had lured him often to break his rule. Only once had he fallen; and that time, selecting at random, he had pulled down an old leather cover, rotting with age, and read:

"The Shropshire Master, by John Garrett." And beneath that title he had found the solemn, triangular subtitle, with many a "Showing how" and a "Further," and the date "1660." So now he turned on the electric switch, lights shone in the distance, and he turned to her.

"It shall be a bower for us in the house of delights," he said.

"My poet said that, too," she responded, almost under her breath.

On the way down the stacks, it occurred to him to ask why a lady out of a book did not marvel at electric switches. This time, though, he held his tongue.

All that evening they took turns on the ladder, the one above crying out in the delights of discovery, the one below waiting to receive the treasures. They went over two shelves that night before they found a book for their reading; and they held long debate between an Italian romance and a forgotten play of the time of Molière. They decided on the play; and until the city clock struck ten they sat side by side at his desk, reading each to other, stopping to discuss their delights and appreciations.

As she left, she said:

"I am coming often, now; and we might as well make an agreement. When I come, you will know by the noise of the shutter. When I go, you are not to follow. Is it agreed?"

"It is agreed."

"One thing more. For a scholar, you are terribly stupid about finding my book. I've changed my mind about that. You are not to try to find it. Promise me."

"But some night in our exploring I may lead you past it."

"I have led you past it—many times," and she was gone.

There followed three months of delights. Night after night he heard the shutter, and went to find her; and then there were long evenings of rambles through the nations and the ages. Sometimes, when he found a book that was especially promising, he would read to her an evening through; sometimes a thought, a character, suggested discussion; and then the joy of her! How swift the turn of her feminine wit, how illuminating her sympathy! She spoke mostly of a woman's metier, the affections; and although Lawrence the Scholar was learned, he got much from his woman out of a book.

Bewitchingly irregular were her comings. Now she would appear three evenings in succession; now she would miss three or four nights. Once it was

an eternal week between visits; and once, after four lonely evenings, she remained only long enough to say:

"My poet keeps me in the book; but I shall be here again in three nights."

"I am jealous of your poet," he said.

"So is my poet jealous," she answered.

Now, all those three months Lawrence had kept himself a recluse. To leave the library at night was too great a risk; the feeling was in him that if she came only one time and found him away, she would never return. Yet even a scholar must exercise when he is twenty-six and the young blood is racing; and dumb-bells and Indian clubs are dull things. It had become a habit with him, then, to lay down his pen and cards at five o'clock and take a long, rambling walk through the wholesale district, crowded at that time of day with homefaring clerks, up to the hills from which he could see the golden-brown bay, and back to his room for a rub before dinner in the restaurant below.

On a certain fine, autumn evening between rains, he returned a little earlier than usual. Shutters were clicking all along the street; the procession of heavy trucks which bumped over the cobbles all day long was reduced to three or four to a block. As he passed the corner nearest the library, he saw a coach by the curb—a stately private carriage. He noticed it languidly, although such a thing was rare in that street of workshops.

"Some of the Courbets," he thought; for the whole block belonged to the estate, and that next building but one held their office.

A clerk, bareheaded and bowing, jumped across the pavement to the carriage door. And behind him She came—his book lady of mystery. She was dressed smartly in tan color; and even in his surprise, his confusion, the subconscious part of him noted the long, easy grace of her figure, which he had seen, hitherto, only in the concealing white draperies which she had worn in their evenings together.

At the carriage door she turned to

thank the clerk—and her eyes met the eyes of Lawrence. For three seconds she looked past him without a sign of recognition. He stepped forward involuntarily; the lady of mystery stepped into the cab, the door closed, and she was gone.

It was far into the night, and the shutter had not clicked. The curtain had fallen on his fairy-play, and it had ended as a tragedy. Now that he had seen her as a thing of flesh, of the workaday world, it must be all over. Her failure to speak, although she had seen him, could mean nothing else. He dropped his arms on the desk and his head on his arms.

Something touched him on the shoulder. She stood behind him. She was the fairy woman in the white gown again.

"Are you angry?" she said.

He could only shake his head.

"Truth between us now," she went on. "Have you believed it?"

"I have tried. But—"

"But?"

He reached into a drawer of his desk and took out a long, white glove.

"Ladies out of books don't wear gloves marked 'Guilbert et Cie, Paris.' I found it on the floor after you had left the first night." He smiled, although his eyes were heavy.

She took the glove, twisted it in her fingers.

"It looks crumpled," she said foolishly.

"It is. It has been much kissed."

She looked down at the glove and forth into the dim reaches of the bookstalls and over at him, before she smiled with a little of her old mischief, and said:

"My turn for truth now. Lawrence the Scholar is a poor man of affairs. He mixes his official report of books catalogued with his poetries—"

"Was that what became of my rhapsody on the ghosts in the books?"

"You handed it in with your June report, and I found it. Oh, you have many shortcomings. For instance,

bookish eyes are not good eyes to see mechanical things, or you would have found the secret panel by which Jacques Courbet used to enter his library from the warehouse next door. It is not strange, though, for only my—only Jacques Courbet and I knew of that passage."

There was a silence of long breaths.
"You have something more to say," she went on.

No answer.

"Have you looked again for my book?" she persisted.

"I am bound by a promise."

"I release you. Here is the book."

From the folds of her dress she

drew a little volume, all bound in green and gold. She handed it to him, and turned down her eyes.

As he opened it, she was speaking:
"There is no question of money—there is no such thing as money—in our book world."

With the instinct of his trade, he turned first to the title-page. It read:

"The Life of Emilie Courbet, by Lawrence Hurley."

He turned a page and yet another; he opened it to its center.

"O love, my woman from a book," he said, "the pages are blank!"

"Yes, my lord and poet," she said, "they are for you to fill!"



WINTER WEARINESS

O H, it's snow, snow, snow.
Through the dreary, eery day!
And it's blow, blow, blow,
Under the frosty night!
When will the winter go?
On its shrinking, slinking way?
When shall we once more know
The dream and the fond delight?

Oh, the rain, rain, rain,
It would seem like a vernal song!
And this numbing sense of pain
With the melody would pass;
I pine for the north wind's wane,
And I long—ah, how I long!—
For the glory-sheen again
A-glimmer upon the grass!

I must bide, my heart, must bide!
But when she comes over the hill,
I shall greet her as a bride,
She of the daffodil hair,
Spring, the hyacinth-eyed,
With her witching and wayward will,
Old as Time's ceaseless tide,
Yet ever and ever fair!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

THEOPHILUS *the* DIPLOMAT



T would have been hard enough, anyway, Daty," declared Miss Keziah, fumbling nervously at her bonnet-strings, "though if I had been alone, I shouldn't have minded it so much. But to have the minister with me, and to see those boys, and then to see *him*, all sprawled out with his mouth open—I declare I was so mortified, seemed as if I'd sink right down through! Oh, do help me untie this bonnet, won't you? I'm so flustered that I've got the thing into more'n a dozen hard knots."

It had happened in this way: Miss Keziah, having attended sewing-circle, was wending a dignified way homeward. Miss Keziah, as an Atwood, a member of one of Bayport's first families, was always dignified; now, escorted by the Reverend Mr. Pease, the newly ordained pastor of the Bayport Methodist Church, she was more dignified than ever. Naturally enough, under the circumstances, her conversation dealt with the achievements and renown of Atwoods dead and gone, particularly those of her father, Captain Zachary Atwood.

"Father," said Miss Keziah, "was a man you would have enjoyed, Mr. Pease. He was one of the most entertainin' talkers you can imagine. Mr. Dodley—our pastor in those days, Mr. Pease—would come and set for hours listenin' to father's talk, and hardly

speak a word himself. And other folks was just the same. Nobody else had much to say on a subject after father had given his views on it."

Mr. Pease nodded sympathetically. He had heard all this before, also sundry ill-natured hints to the effect that no one else had a chance to talk in the presence of the lamented "Cap'n Zach."

"Yes," continued Miss Keziah; "and he was so particular about the place, too. Always had Theophilus—our hired man, Mr. Pease—busy white-washin' or mowin', and keepin' things lookin' nice. When he died, my sister, Daty, and I vowed we'd follow right in his footprints. We've done our best. The home is old, but we've kept it painted up and the grounds lookin' good. We've taken pains, Mr. Pease, and, if I do say it, I believe the Atwood place is worthy of the name."

The reverend gentleman graciously observed that the Atwood establishment had always an aristocratic appearance. Miss Keziah was highly gratified.

"That's just it," she exclaimed. "Aristocratic is what we've tried to keep it. There's none of that shiftlessness that you see around so many houses nowadays. No boarders lazyin' around in hammocks and things; no young ones—children, I should say—kickin' pickets off the fence; no noise or disturbance; always neat and respectable and—mercy on us! what's that?"

They had turned the corner below the library, and the Atwood "place" in all its dignity was before them. The

square, colonial house, with its gleaming white paint and green blinds, the stretch of front fence with sharpened pickets and iron "hitching-posts," the rows of box hedges leading up to the front door. But what was this that made Miss Keziah stop, gasp, and drop the reticule containing the tidy she was crocheting for the church fair?

Half a dozen children, of both sexes, were clinging to the pickets of the sacred front fence and peering over it. Three or four barefooted boys were returning from the orchard across the road, their hands and pockets filled with green apples. Another youngster was standing in the gateway, an apple in his hand and his arm raised ready to throw it at something inside. The grocery wagon had stopped opposite the gate, and the driver was leaning out, a broad grin on his freckled face.

"Hold on there, Legs," he called, in a loud whisper to the boy in the gateway; "don't chuck till the rest of the gang git here. Then all hands fire to once, and give him a good one."

The boy hailed as "Legs" obediently paused, and his companions hurried up.

"All ready now," commanded the grocer's clerk. "When I says the word, you let him have it. 'One—two—'"

"What does this mean?"

It was Miss Keziah who asked the question. Her sudden appearance burst the interested group into rapidly moving fragments. The grocery wagon whirled down the road in a cloud of dust. The children on the fence ran headlong, hither and thither. Only "Legs" remained behind, and he did so because the minister's fingers were inside his shirt-collar.

"Eddie," demanded the clergyman, "what were you doing? Answer me this minute."

Eddie dropped his unripe projectiles and fought for liberty. Finding the fight unavailing, he began to cry.

"I—I wan't doin' nothin'," he whimpered. "Thorf Hopkins is asleep in the old maid's—I mean Miss Atwood's—front yard, and we was goin' to wake him up. You lemme alone."

"Theophilus? Asleep? Where? My soul and body!"

Miss Keziah was peering over the front fence. It was the picture before her which caused her to exclaim—"all but swear," she told her sister afterward. One of the rows of box hedge on either side of the path was trimmed, after a fashion—the fashion of a home-made hair cut. Beside the other, and in its shade, was stretched the figure of a man asleep. The pruning-shears were in one hand, the red nose was pointed to the sky, the mouth was open, and from it and aforementioned nose issued most undignified snores—snores such as never should have profaned the respectable calm of the Atwood atmosphere.

"Lemme alone," protested "Legs," his anger rising.

"Aren't you ashamed?" asked Mr. Pease.

The boy wriggled from his grasp and retired to a safe distance. "No, I ain't!" he shouted. "'Tain't nobody but old Thorf Hopkins, and he's town talk, anyhow. Dad says nobody but darned fools would have such a loafer round their place. I—"

He didn't wait to finish the sentence, but, dodging the indignant minister, ran away at top speed.

"Miss Atwood—" began Mr. Pease, but the lady did not hear him.

"Theophilus Hopkins!" she cried. "Wake up this minute."

The recumbent "hired man" languidly opened one eye. With it he saw the trembling form of his mistress. Whereupon he opened the other eye, and sat up hurriedly.

"What do you mean by such doin's?" demanded Miss Keziah. "Sleepin'—in the front yard—with your work ha'f-done—and snorin'—and that ha'f not done fit for a cat—to wake the dead! Get up!"

But Mr. Hopkins had had time to recover the presence of mind for which he was noted. He groaned and put a hand to his forehead.

"Where be I?" he asked faintly.

"Where be you?" repeated the lady, too angry to trifle with grammar.

"Snorin' in the middle of the walk, that's where you be! And the whole town and the minister—and *our* house, of all places—oh, my soul and body!"

Theophilus groaned again. "Oh, dear, dear!" he wailed piteously. "My poor head! Last thing I remember was layin' into that hedge like a house afire, and then—I cal'late I had a stroke, a touch of the sun, or somethin' I——"

"Touch of your granny! You had a touch of dog laziness, that's what you had. I never—I—Mr. Pease——"

Poor Miss Keziah stopped, choked, and fled to the house. The Reverend Pease looked after her, shook his head, walked on until out of sight, and then leaned against a tree and laughed. Mr. Hopkins yawned, stretched, and retired to the barn to finish his nap.

To her sympathetic and shocked sister Miss Keziah told the tale of the family disgrace, concluding it with:

"It's no use, Daty; we've got to get rid of him."

Miss Daty shook her head dubiously.

"I know, Keziah," she replied, "but that's easier said than done. It was father that hired him, and he's been here so long now that I guess he thinks he owns the place, and us, too. It's easy to say 'get rid of him,' but how are you goin' to do it? You was goin' to discharge him when he pretty nigh burned the barn down, fallin' asleep with a pipe in his mouth; but you didn't. And you was goin' to get rid of him that time when we was visitin' up to Mary's, and he let all the plants dry up and die, instead of waterin' 'em. But he's here yet, and, if we was to call him in this minute, he'd have such a good excuse, and talk so feelin'ly about father, and about how much store he sets by us, and about his wantin' to die in the harness, and the like of that, that he'd wind us right round his fingers. Now ain't that the livin' truth?"

It was the truth, and Keziah knew it. The eloquent tongue of Theophilus had saved him time and time again. His excuses were always good ones, and their number was unlimited. When these failed him, he fell back upon "Cap'n Zach" and the family pride.

Driven from this line of entrenchments, he retired behind his daughter, Rebecca, and her dependence upon him for food and shelter. "Becky" had been a particular pet of Captain Zachary.

"I don't care for myself," Mr. Hopkins was wont to say; "but if anything happened to me, Becky, bein' dependent, would have to be town poor. And if *that* wouldn't make the cap'n turn over in his grave, then nothin' would."

So Miss Keziah, realizing all this, and realizing, also, that no other Bayport man would "hire out" during the fishing season for love or money, found no good answer to her sister's statement.

"Humph!" she sniffed. "Well, if it wasn't for that girl, I bet you he shouldn't loaf round here. I'd find some way for us to get along. Anyhow, I think it's a pity that you and me must be martyrs, just because Thorf Hopkins has got a daughter. She's grown up now. Why don't she go to the city, or to work somewhere? Other girls do!"

"Theophilus says she ain't strong enough to work, you know, Keziah."

"Humph! I guess she takes that disease from her father. Well, if I can't discharge him, I can give him a piece of my mind; and I'm going straight to that barn and do it. You just watch me."

Miss Daty was still doubtful.

"It won't be any use," she said. "He'll talk you round same as he always does."

"Same as he does you, you mean. I ain't so easy. He sha'n't soft-soap me. I'll make his lazy ears burn for him."

She flounced out of the back door. Miss Daty sighed, and took up her needlework. She was used to relying upon her strong-minded, older sister. But in this case she did not rely implicitly. Like the rest of Bayport, she knew Thorf Hopkins.

A full half-hour elapsed before Miss Keziah returned to the house. She entered in silence, and silently set about making a cake for supper.

"Well?" ventured Miss Daty, after a time.

"Well what?"

"My! you're cross. Don't take *my* head off. I haven't done anything. What did he say when you scolded him?"

Keziah answered without turning around.

"He didn't say much," she said. "The fact is, Daty, I'm afraid I—that is, I'm not real sure—"

"Humph! I see. He got the best of it, as usual, I s'pose."

"Well, you see, he was settin' in the barn with a wet handkerchief round his head, and he spoke so feeblelike, and seemed to be kind of wanderin' in his mind, that I was afra'd it might be a sunstroke, after all. And so I tried to make him more comfortable before I commenced to scold. And he acted so grateful and talked so nice about fatha', and seemed so sorry, that—"

"Yes?"

"Yes, well, then he had a kind of relapse, and that scared me, and—and—I told him he'd better go home and rest up till to-morrow. Why don't you say something?"

"I don't know as there's anything to say."

"Daty Atwood, tell me honest. You don't think that was more soft-soap, do you?"

"I don't know, Keziah. I'm—I'm kind of afraid it was."

"If I thought it was I'd—I don't know *what* I'd do. Where on earth is the brown sugar? Seems to me I never saw things go so contrary in my life."

After the supper-dishes were washed Miss Daty went down to the store on an errand. She returned in a state of indignant excitement.

"Keziah," she cried, "what do you think I've found out? That awful Thorf has fooled us again. You sent him home to get over a sunstroke, and he and Lemuel Snow went up to the ponds perch-fishin'. That's how sick he was."

The elder Miss Atwood sprang from her chair.

"The deceivin' rascal!" she ex-

claimed. "If it wasn't for his daughter, I'd—"

"Oh! and that isn't all. I've found out the biggest news about her—his daughter, Becky, I mean. She's engaged to Solon Taylor. It's just come out, and they're to be married in a couple of months. Think of it! After his tellin' us she'd go to the poorhouse if he couldn't work for her, and all that!"

Keziah clapped her hands. "Good!" she cried.

"Good? Are you crazy?"

"No, I ain't crazy. But I've had a plan, and that daughter's been the stick-er in it. Now she's out of the way—or goin' to be pretty soon—I can see my way clear. Don't ask me one question now. You'll have to wait till I've got it clear in my mind."

So Miss Daty waited, under protest, until, at half-past eleven that night, she awoke to find her sister seated at the table in their bedroom busily writing.

"Keziah Atwood!" she exclaimed, "what on earth are you doin' up at this time of night?"

Keziah triumphantly held up a sheet of note-paper.

"I'm writin' to Mary, up in Boston," she answered. "You remember she said if we ever wanted a servant-girl she could get us one from the Orphan's Home, or some of those charities she's interested in around there. I'm tellin' her to send one right off. With a good girl we could get along. She could help with the housework, and I could feed the horse, and you could 'tend the hens. And we could get somebody to mow the grass and hoe the garden once a fortnit, I know. By the time Becky Hopkins is married the new girl will be all broke in. Then Mr. Theophilus can go perchin', or to the dickens, if he wants to. We'll be rid of him. I've been soft-soaped long enough."

II.

The new girl arrived eight days later. She was about nineteen years of age, with a turned-up nose, red hair drawn smoothly back from her forehead, and

fastened with a round comb, and her smile was of the "won't-come-off" variety. Miss Keziah met her at the station and drove her to the Atwood mansion.

"Now," said the lady, as they turned into the yard, "here we are at home, what is to be your home, I hope, for a good many years. What did you say your name was?"

"Which name, ma'am?" inquired the new arrival, beaming upon the house, the world in general, and Miss Daty in the doorway.

"Why, your name! The name they call you by."

"Lordy!" was the enthusiastic exclamation, "they call me by most any old name. The rest of the kids at the home they called me 'Firebug,' 'count of my hair. And the cook always called me 'Lonesome,' 'cause I looked so sort of alone when I first come. They found me on a door-step when I was a baby, you know. And the matron, Mrs. Davis, she called me 'Imogene,' 'cause she always liked that name. And the head nurse called me 'Forget it,' 'cause I kept forgettin' everything. And the janitor called me 'Rubber,' 'cause he said I was all the time rubber-neckin'. Lordy! I—"

"We will call you Imogene," interrupted Miss Keziah hurriedly. "And please don't say 'Lordy.'"

"All right'm. I don't care what you call me. Lordy! Excuse me, I forgot. I used to say 'God Almighty,' but the matron didn't like it."

"Goodness! I shouldn't think she would!"

"Yes'm. So I changed to 'Lordy.' But I'd just as soon change again. I ain't particular."

"I'm glad of that. Imogene, this is my sister, Miss Daty Atwood."

Imogene was at home in three minutes. At home and immensely delighted with everything. She was enthusiastic over the old house, clapped her hands when introduced to the poultry, and actually cheered when shown her own bright, sunny bedroom.

"It's elegant, ma'am," she cried. "Just elegant. Now, I guess you think

I ought to be gittin' to work. All right; I'm ready."

As a worker she was a distinct success. There wasn't a lazy bone in her thin, energetic body. She was up and stirring at five o'clock, and, though her knowledge of cookery was limited and deadly, she was willing and anxious to learn. Her chief fault was forgetfulness, but for every lapse of memory she had such a good excuse, and was so contrite, that the sisters on the whole were much pleased.

"I think she's goin' to do, Daty," said Miss Keziah, at the end of a fortnight. "Anyhow, she ain't lazy, and that's a comfort, after what we've had to put up with."

"We're real glad you like here so well, Imogene," Miss Daty confided. "We was kind of afraid you might be lonesome, down here so far from the city."

Imogene laughed. "Who? Me?" she exclaimed, "I guess not. Don't catch me bein' lonesome while there's folks around that I care about. It used to be lonesome enough when I first come to the Home and the other kids made fun of me. But I ain't lonesome now, with you and Miss Keziah so kind and nice. 'Twould be diff'rent, I s'pose, if I'd ever had a family. Your hired man, Mr. Hopkins, he says he's dreadin' the time when his daughter's goin' to git married and go away. He's a widower, ain't he? It must be dreadful to be a widower. 'Most as bad as bein' an old maid. Oh, Lordy! I forgot you was old maids. Please excuse me, won't you?"

Theophilus and Imogene had grown to be great friends. Mr. Hopkins was surprised when the new servant came. If any suspicion mingled with the surprise he kept it to himself, merely asking embarrassing questions occasionally, and happening into the kitchen suddenly and without notice. But what ever reserve he had shown wore away, and now he seemed to accept the girl as a member of the family, even allowing her, as a favor, to do a part of his work at times.

The two months passed, and Becky

Hopkins' wedding-day approached. The Atwood sisters, particularly Miss Keziah, were still firm in their determination to discharge Theophilus as soon as the "dependent" daughter should be provided for. But the question who was to do the discharging was still a question.

"*You* ought to tell him, Keziah," urged Miss Daty. "You're the elder." "Yes, but you can talk so much nicer than I can, Daty. You could send him away so much pleasanter. I should hurt his feelin's, and I wouldn't want to do that, for father's sake."

At length, with the wedding-day only two days off, a decision had to be reached, and the sisters, after hours of argument, finally agreed to decide by lot. They would each take a pack of cards and play at "Canfield," their favorite solitaire. The one who "got it" first won, and the other must discharge Mr. Hopkins.

They played all the forenoon and neither "got it." After dinner they began again. At exactly half-past four in the afternoon, Miss Keziah uttered an exclamation. Her sister looked up.

"Oh!" cried Miss Keziah, "if this ain't the most provokin' thing. Here I've all but got it, and I don't see another move. Oh, dear me!"

Miss Daty looked at the seven piles of cards before her sister on the table and at the partially complete sequences above them. There were only four cards left in Keziah's hand, and the ten of clubs was uppermost. And then she saw something else, something most alarming. The jack of hearts lay on the right-hand pile. If it was transferred to the queen of spades on the sixth pile, then the ten would follow, and—it was an obvious move, but Miss Keziah had not seen it. Ordinarily Daty would have spoken, but now—

"I declare," she observed uneasily. "I don't know's we'd ought to play this, anyway. It seems like gamblin'; don't you think so?"

"Nonsense! 'Twas father's favorite game, and do you s'pose *he'd* gamble? I'm goin' to keep right on, and—oh! I never thought of movin' that jack."

It was all over, Miss Keziah had "got it." At a quarter past five Miss Daty, in tears, and with the envelope containing forty dollars, the hired man's advance wages for a month, entered the parlor, whither Mr. Hopkins had been summoned.

Miss Keziah, pale and worried, waited in the sitting-room. She heard the doomed Theophilus enter the kitchen and speak to Imogene, who was busily blacking the stove. Then he came into the sitting-room.

"Miss Daty's in the parlor," faltered Keziah. "She's got somethin' particular to say to you, Thorf."

Mr. Hopkins was startled. The parlor was a room used only on solemn and sad occasions, like a funeral or a minister's visit. And Miss Daty was waiting to see him in the parlor.

"What's the matter, ma'am?" he asked hurriedly.

"Daty'll tell you, Theophilus. You must remember that you've been warned often enough. And—and—anyway, you won't have Becky dependent on you only a day or so longer."

Thus the rodent which Mr. Hopkins' keen nose had scented for some time became visible. Forewarned being forearmed, he girded up his loins, figuratively speaking, and entered the parlor, prepared to fight for his life as a wage-earner.

At six he emerged, smiled pleasantly upon Miss Keziah, said: "I thank you kindly, ma'am; I do so," and went his way. And from the parlor Miss Daty called dismally for help.

"I couldn't do it, Keziah," she sobbed. "I tried and tried, but I simply couldn't. I got as far as givin' him the month's wages in the envelope, and then he commenced to talk about father, and Becky, and you and me, and how he'd grown gray in our service, and—oh, dear! you know how he can talk, Keziah! So I never said a word about dischargin' him. And now it's all to be done over; and he's got the money, and—"

Poor Miss Daty broke down and

cried. Her sister stroked her hair in sympathy.

"I suspicioned how 'twould be, Daty," she said soothingly. "We're soft-soaped again. Well, I know I shouldn't do any better than you have, and while I was waitin' I thought of another plan in case this didn't work. You and me haven't visited Mary, up to Boston, for a long time. And she's been waitin' for us to come. We'll go to-morrow. We'll write a letter to Thorf, tellin' him he's discharged, and leave it with Imogene to give to him after we've gone. Imogene can take care of the house for us. We'll stay till the end of the week, and when we come home it'll be all settled. I'm sorry he's got the money ahead of time, but we'll make it plain in the letter just why we gave it to him. There, there, dear! Don't you cry any more. Our troubles with that creature are about over."

III.

The letter was written and rewritten. At length it was finished and handed to Imogene with orders to be sure and give it to Mr. Hopkins on the day of his daughter's wedding. Then, after repeated instructions to their maid servant concerning the care of the house, the Atwood sisters left for Boston.

The visit was such a pleasant one that it was extended until the following Monday. Mary, the Atwood niece, pleaded for a still longer stay, but the sisters were in a hurry to learn how matters were at home, and, particularly, how the great plan had worked. They did not write Imogene of their coming, and, therefore, when they left the train at the Bayport station on Monday evening, no one met them. As it was a clear moonlight they walked home.

The house was empty. Spick and span it was, with everything in its place, but no Imogene was in sight. Much alarmed, they lit the lamp and proceeded to search for the missing maid servant before preparing supper. The girl's bedroom was, of course, visited at once.

"Keziah," faltered Miss Daty, "her things are gone! Has she run off? What do you s'pose it *can* mean?"

In the lower part of the house a door opened and closed. They hurried down. There, in the sitting-room, stood Theophilus Hopkins fumbling with the match-box. They gazed, open-mouthed, at him, and he in turn blinked at them in great surprise.

"What are you doin' in this house?" demanded Miss Keziah. And, for once in his life, Mr. Hopkins was really embarrassed.

"Why—why—" he stammered, "I didn't expect to see you, ma'am; you never wrote you was comin', and—I didn't expect to see you."

"I guess likely you didn't! What are you doin' in this house after—where's Imogene?"

Theophilus drew a long breath.

"Well, ma'am," he said, "I've got consider'ble to tell you. If we'd known you was comin' Imogene she'd have been here to tell it herself, but bein' as how—"

"Where—is—Imogene?" repeated the goaded Keziah fiercely.

"Well, ma'am, she's to home."

"To home! No, she isn't, either. We've looked—"

"I mean she's to her new home. You see—"

"Her new home? Has she got another place?"

"Well, 'taint exactly that. You see, ma'am—hadn't you better set down?"

But the sisters wouldn't sit down; they were far too much disturbed to think of such a thing. Miss Daty had not spoken a word since the appearance of the ex-hired man, and her sister's temper, long-suffering though it was, had given way at last.

"Thorf Hopkins," she cried, "you tell me what you're talkin' about, or I'll—I don't know's I won't call in the constable. What have you done with our girl?"

Mr. Hopkins smiled deprecatingly.

"Well, ma'am," he said, "I've took her away."

Miss Daty collapsed into the rocking-

chair. Miss Keziah swallowed hard and stared mutely.

"You see," explained Theophilus, "Imogene and me have come to think a lot of each other. She told me about her bein' an orphan, and I told her about my bein' a widower, and how pretty soon I should be all alone in the world. Bein' alone herself, she naturally sympathized with me, and—and—well, I never see a woman, since Tamson—my wife as was—died, that seemed to so kind of fill up my life, as you might say. And you may not believe it, ma'am, but she felt the same way about me. And so," concluded Mr. Hopkins, doing his best to blush, "after the first month or so, we decided that some day we'd git married."

"*'Married!'*" Miss Keziah repeated the word and sank upon the sofa. Miss Daty, who seemed to be in a sort of hypnotic trance, said "*'Married!'* also.

"Yes'm," said Theophilus. "But, of course, it couldn't be until Becky'd gone, 'cause I couldn't take care of two women, not on my wages. And she wouldn't marry me until I'd saved enough to have some new clothes, and savin's slow work. But when you give me that nice forty-dollar present—for which I thank you both kindly—I went to her and says I: '*'Geney,'*' says I, 'I've got the money now,' I says, 'and when the minister's through marryin' Solon and Becky why not let him hitch you and me? Kind of kill two birds of a feather with one shot, as the sayin' is?' She felt bad about you; thought 'twas underhanded, sort of, you bein' out of town and not havin' heard a word, but—"

"Do—do you mean to tell me that—that you and Imogene are actually married?" demanded Miss Keziah.

"Yes'm, we was married right after Becky was. If we'd known you was comin' home to-day my wife would have been here to—"

"What have you got to support a wife on?"

"Well, I've got my wages here. 'Course they ain't very big, but me and Becky's got along on 'em so far.

didn't know but, things bein' as they was, you might raise me a little, and—"

"Thorff Hopkins, did you get a letter from my sister and me?"

"There!" The bridegroom waved his hands. "I 'most forgot that letter myself. You give it to Imogene afore you went away, and she was so afraid she'd forgit it, that she put it away very careful. And then I spoke to her about marryin', and that sent everything else out of her head. When she did remember the letter, she couldn't remember where she put it, havin' put it away so careful, for fear she'd forgit it. But to-night the place she put it come to her, and she sent me over after it. It's right behind the clock on the mantelpiece here."

He stepped across the room, and, from behind the clock, took the letter, still in its sealed envelope. He did not open it at the moment, having something further to say.

"Imogene, my wife," he went on, "she was worried about leavin' you; feared you couldn't git along without her. But I says: 'They've got *me*, same as ever, and we've managed to get along for a good many years without help,' I says. It must be a great satisfaction to you and your sister, Miss Keziah, to know that we couldn't have got married for some time if you hadn't give me that forty-dollar present. I know I deserve it if I do say it, but 'tain't everybody'd have give it, just the same. As for me, I'll work harder'n ever for you, if such a thing's possible. And you don't know how natural it seems to have somebody dependent on me."

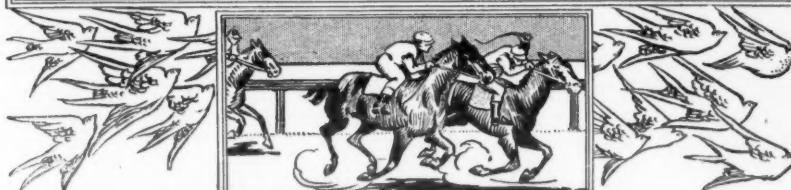
The Atwood sisters looked at each other. Then Miss Keziah held out her hand.

"Theophilus," she commanded, "give me that letter."

Mr. Hopkins handed her the delayed notice of his discharge. Miss Keziah looked at the sealed envelope, and then tore it and its enclosure into very small pieces.

As she said to Miss Daty afterward, what else was there to do?

MCKESSON'S PARLAY



Martha McCulloch Williams



KESSON frowned grimly, as though bent on showing fate a face to the full as forbidding as her own. Inasmuch as nature had cast him in jovial rather than in saturnine mold, the frown became him very ill. Indeed, before he "made" the football-team in his sophomore year, he had been fairly cherubic, and, though training and reckless play had changed that quickly enough, he still retained, when shaven, smiling, and well-fed, some likeness to his boyish self.

Nevertheless, at this time, the boyish self had retreated so far that he was hardly an acquaintance. McKesson had come to twenty-nine, and to the end of his patrimony. Also, it appeared, to the end of his luck. For a month things had gone against him steadily. First the Agnew failure, one of the worst that the Street had known in twenty years, had hit him to the tune of twenty thousand; then on its heels he had been caught in a "bear squeeze"—had escaped with his life, to be sure, but only by leaving behind the greater part of his golden fleece. He had further lost a "swell bet" on a dark horse, supposed to be the best thing of the season. But none of all those things had cut so deeply as to find himself, for the first time since nineteen, wretchedly in love, and be-

cause of love, still more wretchedly in need of ready money.

Schwarzburger, his rival, was another name for ready money—so rich that he seemed fairly to ooze millions. But that was less disgusting than his habit of spending millions upon objects of art, and nature, that caught and filled his eye. It was a common saying among the envious, that the only thing which could talk louder and more blatantly than Schwarzburger himself, was—Schwarzburger's money. He counted days and dollars lost that did not get him into the papers, morning and afternoon. Naturally, men with some havings of blood and breeding, some decencies of reserve, hated him. McKesson's hatred had a more personal foundation. It began in Doris Flecknoe, and ended, if it could be said to have an end, in the fact that Doris would have to marry Schwarzburger, unless he—McKesson—came to the rescue.

Doris had been widowed almost in her honeymoon; she was twenty-three, with eyes still childishly innocent, and a vivid peach-tinted face. Slight, yet rounded, light on her feet, with a voice enchantingly soft, and a grace of motion that might have been caught from wind-blown reeds, she was quite sufficient excuse for a millionaire's infatuation. Schwarzburger was madly infatuated. In proof, take the fact that for three years he had withheld himself from collecting a just debt, or from

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advancing it as a claim to personal consideration. Doris had inherited the debt among the effects of her husband, poor, muddle-headed Jack Flecknoe, who had been only potentially wealthy. The straightening of his tangled affairs had left Doris little besides some stocks, problematic in value. These paid scant dividends at irregular intervals—still, there was a chance that, by holding them long enough, they might provide for her handsomely. She was holding them by grace of Schwarzbarger, who had lent twenty thousand upon them. If they ever went even to par he would have security ten times over—but the longest heads in the Street thought that instead of par they were likelier to reach zero.

"Tell the little widow not to worry—we'll call it a sleeping loan—I'm ready to take my chances," Schwarzbarger had said to her man of business. To Doris herself, it is but just to add, he had never named money. Not even when he proposed to her, as he had done regularly every three months since her year of mourning ended. Thereby he had increased rather than lessened her sense of obligation.

"If only he would but be nasty—threaten and bluster—I could bring myself to defy him, and make an end of it," Doris had said to McKesson, after he came into the game. That was only six months back—until then Doris had been trying hard to bring her rebellious instincts into a subjection of prudence. In her girlhood she had come near enough to poverty to feel the allurement of great wealth; moreover, she felt in Schwarzbarger a stratum of kindness underneath his loud vulgarity. There was something, indeed, close to delicacy in his attitude to her. "Of course I want you badly—the one thing I've ever found that I couldn't buy outright," he had said. "But I don't want to *buy* you. You are not to think of—anything outside. It's to be just a case of man and woman. Some day, if I keep coming around, you'll learn to like me. I'm not going to give you up until I'm dead, or you're married. It looks to me as if I've got

more than an even chance—so long as there's nobody in my daylight. You'll think about it—won't you? You really might do worse."

She had agreed—of course she might do worse—she could not possibly hope to do better—and he was more than kind. Then when she was alone she had thought, until her head whirled, and there was an ache in her soul. She wanted to be high-minded—to put from her thoughts of material advantage, but there crept in, like specters, memories of the old pinched days. The pinched days must come again, unless she brought herself to tolerate Schwarzbarger—or married somebody else who could keep her in cotton-wool. Of course she would first pay the debt, even though paying it left her with little more than she stood in. She would not in the least mind taking everything from the man she loved. So she would love Schwarzbarger—if only she could—if his name and his nose did not forbid. Deep down she had a mortal dread that she would end by overlooking her lack of love for him through a craven shrinking from hardship and privation, a sybaritic joy in luxurious ease.

McKesson's era changed all that. They had begun to love each other in the course of their first fateful dinner-party, and very shortly reached the stage of planning a life together. McKesson had been for marrying her out of hand, but Doris had something of pride, also something of prudence. Just then her stocks were at their lowest—so low that they would not more than pay Schwarzbarger's claim in half—besides, with the market seesawing up and down, and back and forth, as it was, she felt that it would be most hazardous for McKesson to anger the rich man.

So the lovers had waited between hope and fear. They were entirely agreed that, at the first lucky turn, Doris should free herself, and trust McKesson for everything else. More than once the turn had seemed tantalizingly imminent—enough so to make Doris forget prudence and shrink openly

from her rich suitor. A month before, he had seemed fully to realize the situation, and had pressed for a definite decision. "You can take me or leave me—after three years it ought to be easy for you to make up your mind," he had said. Doris had listened, shivering. It was neither her mind nor her courage that needed making up—she was ready to face anything, if only she might face it with McKesson. But she could not forget all that she owed to Schwarzbarger; the debt must be paid in some way, or she could never look herself in the eyes again when she faced her mirror. She had answered him with gentle dignity. "You have been so good, so patient. Now please give me a little more time. Only a month. There is—something—I must do first. Until it is done—I hardly know what I shall say to you."

"I know what you ought to say right now—what you would say if it were not for that yellow-haired may-pole, McKesson," Schwarzbarger had flung back at her, yet in the next breath had agreed to wait. In the succeeding weeks he had held nobly to the agreement, not even looking *the* question upon their casual meetings. The month lacked but a day of being up—and Doris was as far as ever from being ready to answer.

She had meant to forego her last fragment of pride and let McKesson pay Schwarzbarger, as he had wanted to do from the first. So far, the turmoil of his fortunes had made that payment out of the question, but meanwhile her stocks had flattered her shamefully, rising by sixteenths and eighths, almost to the point when they would have set her free, only to drop back again.

McKesson understood. The understanding but made him more desperate. With one more day of grace he was taking stock of himself and his belongings, fairly cursing the simple tastes that had left him, at this pinch, with so very little of mercantile value. He had hated glitter and ostentation. His grandfather's seal-ring, his father's watch, his college fraternity-pin, and

a scarf-pin or so, represented his jewelry; he had already parted with his hunters, his park hack, his tandem team and traps, and, in dismissing his man, had given him pretty well all the clothes he could spare. Even if he had not—he caught himself up, almost laughing outright. He could not fancy himself selling such things, any more than he could bring himself to think of recourse to a pawnbroker. Anyway, he had nothing to pledge—the most charitable knight of the three balls would not advance him fifty dollars on all his chattels. Carefully, but with a sense of heat and blur in his vision, he ran over his bank-book, totting up items here and there. With all checks honored, he had a hundred dollars to his credit. He felt in his pockets and fished out a few loose coins and a bill of modest denomination. He scowled at the money, but counted it carefully, then thrust it back, muttering: "Enough for expenses—if I can keep myself from tipping. Robert Elvers McKesson, you are going on a fool's errand, as a lamb to slaughter."

Early that afternoon, with the hundred dollars in his pocket, he stood in the betting-ring at Green Park, carefully scanning the slates of the chalkers. He had room and leisure—this was an off day in racing, albeit there was one fairly considerable stake event—the Crestmere. But it was robbed of speculative interest by the fact that Mallon's entry had an indisputable mortgage on it—Mallon's three colts so far outclassing all the rest, that the stable would be held at about one to ten. Therefore, many of the regulars had taken a day off for fishing—or other cognate diversions. The emptiness of the big stand was but barely blotted with spectators here and there; the club-house and the lawns were more than half-deserted. There was only the thinnest fringe along the rail, watching the preliminaries for the opening event. McKesson had stood there for five minutes, his eyes glued to a pair of exceptionally fine glasses, before he so much as looked toward the ring.

He did not mean to let himself look at all toward the club-house. Doris was sure to be there in ward of Schwarzbarger. It was an article of religion with Schwarzbarger always and everywhere to back Mallon's entries—not heavily, to be sure, but yet heavily enough to make in the aggregate good winnings. Mallon's entries had a habit of winning—thereby proving that fickle fortune is notoriously a partial jade. For Mallon had already more millions than he needed. In fact, if justice had been done, his stable, instead of making money for him, ought to have been losing. Win or lose, Schwarzbarger stuck to it. Tips availed nothing against his steadfast faith. "Huh! The racing game's all luck—when it isn't crooked," he snorted. "Mallon can't afford to be crooked—and he surely has got the luck. Ought to have it, by blazes! Look at the prices he pays for yearlings, besides breeding so many himself! His are the horses to run for my money—or for any man's that wants to keep ahead of the game."

McKesson was compelled to subscribe to this in part. Luck was the main element in the racing game. But to-day he had no thought of backing the Mallon entry. Indeed, he had only a hazy notion, at first, as to backing anything. He was going to bet—to risk his whole available capital, yet he had not looked at a dope-sheet, nor even troubled himself to read the "selections" of the various tipsters, in the morning papers. Instead, he was trusting to his own eyes—in so far as he trusted anything. But his main appeal was to blind chance. Unless it stood his friend he was friendless indeed.

He had noted a rangy brown colt, almost the last to appear on the course, which, beginning in a slow canter, finished the last time around with a whirlwind quarter. The white, muzzled brown was a Sheldrake colt, Kildee by name. It amazed McKesson to see him rated at four to one. Hatchmont, the favorite, ruled at evens; and Fairley, the second choice, at two to one. A couple of three-to-one shots, reasonably well-bred and good-looking, with Kil-

dee, made up the field. McKesson got his money down on the brown just as he heard the call to post. He was glad—almost as glad as that the race was a mere dash—for, inside two minutes after the race was on, he would know whether or not he had done well or ill.

It seemed to him he had hardly drawn breath after getting back to the rail, when here were the racers thundering down upon him—and until the last three jumps, so well bunched, it was anybody's race. Then a white-snipped chestnut muzzle shot ahead of everything—and stayed there until well under the wire. McKesson rubbed his eyes—he could hardly believe it—yet indubitably he had won. He did not stir till he saw the number hoisted—then, after a long breath, he saw that he had been clutching the rail in front of him so hard that his fingers were cramped. As he turned away, in spite of him his eyes went vagrantly to the club-house lawn—there to rest in dubious joy upon Doris standing with Schwarzbarger beaming beside her. Her eyes beckoned to him—but just then he could not obey. In fact, he kept manfully away from her until he had wagered his all in the next race.

"Exmoor—at evens—he's all there is to the race," he replied, in answer to Schwarzbarger's cross-questioning. Schwarzbarger grinned, but growled: "Then it's a case of a fool parting with his money, young man. I could have told you to back Starbuck—always play Mallon's horses, if you want to keep the cash."

"Oh, I don't know. Not to-day, at any rate," McKesson said jauntily. He was in curious mood. Fear and dread had fallen away from him. Apart from all that winning meant, he had a fierce joy in the hazard of his play. He would give his soul to win—but, even if he lost, the venture would have been worth while—a game quite worth the candle. "I sha'n't play anything of Mallon's," he went on; "the stable is too much everybody's favorite. That's the worst, the surest hoodoo, that a racing man can have. When

I'm an owner, I shall take pains to lose often enough, and have enough mediocre horses, to keep my stable from becoming a popular fetish."

"Fetishes be hanged!" Schwarzbarger fairly roared. "I tell you, it's Mallon's luck no less than his squareness that draws the money—"

"There is bad luck no less than good," McKesson interrupted. "And Mallon's about due to have it hit him in chunks—"

"He can't lose the Crestmere—if two of his horses fell and broke their necks, the third would come home on the bit," Schwarzbarger snorted. McKesson did not answer—he was too intent on watching the start. A mighty ordinary lot had gone to the post for a mile spin. Now that it was too late, he wondered if he had not been foolish to bet on anything? If he lost—but he would not think further that way. He was going to win—after he had won, it would be time enough to decide what he would do when the Crestmere was run. He dared not let himself look at Doris—how could he, with no answer for the anguished questioning of her eyes? She leaned lightly forward, breath coming quickly over parted lips, watching the ragged, color-flecked mass wheel, and twist, and at last whirl down-course, in a still more ragged line. Then she dropped the glasses—Schwarzbarger's glasses—and shut her eyes tight, paling visibly. McKesson had no eyes for her—his heart was thumping like a trip-hammer as he watched Exmoor, a blocky bay, run last for three-quarters, then come home spread-eagling his field. Even Starbuck, in the place, was three open lengths behind him, yet Schwarzbarger said disdainfully: "Well! You won—by a fluke. That start was enough to kill anything's chances—except the one that beat the gate."

"Perhaps," said McKesson, hurrying toward the ring. He did not come back until after the third race. Then he looked so thoughtful that Schwarzbarger chaffed him.

"So! You would not come and share your wisdom with us! Did you

drop all your easy money on—the worst among that lot of platers?"

McKesson smiled indulgently, shaking his head. "There were so many of them—nine, and hardly a shade in the odds," he replied. "A wise man, it appears to me, wants a chance either to win or lose; besides, I like to bet on horses—I don't want it to be a question of the judges, or the jockeys."

He sat down by Doris, whispering too low for Schwarzbarger to catch the words: "Sweetheart, pray for Greysteel! Our money is on him—at fifteen to one. If he wins—"

Doris gave a little inarticulate cry. Schwarzbarger turned angrily upon McKesson, but McKesson, his mouth set hard, was looking away—at something far up the course. The little cry, inarticulate though it was, had told him more of what was in Doris' heart than the most explicit speech. For a breathless space it blurred his vision, and set drums beating in his ears. Presently the drums lulled enough for him to hear Schwarzbarger saying gaily: "Mrs. Flecknoe, shall we put our commission on Mallon's entry? You don't want to bet? Nonsense! Worse than nonsense! That's what we are here for. Money! Piff! That's my part of it. We'll divide—after the race. I promise to take the losings for half your share of the winnings. Is that a fair bargain?"

"Most unfair—to you," Doris answered, trying to smile, although her lips were white. Ostentatiously, Schwarzbarger beckoned a commissioner, still more ostentatiously he laid a yellowback in the man's hand, saying in a big voice, and glancing about him as he spoke: "Five hundred on Mallon's entry—if you can get anything better than one to twenty."

"Going at one to ten," the man said, hustling away. McKesson shivered faintly. Not that his unfaith in Mallon's horses wavered, but from nervous tension. Motion was imperative—with another whisper to Doris he left her, and made his way to the paddock. The saddling-bell had just rung, and the seven to go in the Crestmere were

swarming in. He had to admit that on looks, no less past performances, Mallon's three—Wanton, Wilful, and Fox Fire—were entitled to sweep the boards. Two-year-olds, yet big and stout, and lusty, in the pink of condition, and royally bred—it did seem as if only a lunatic, or an imbecile, would take chances against them.

Yet he gathered some heart as he looked over Greysteel, who was low but rakishly built, supple as a cat, and to the full as quick-footed. His coat, a silver-roan, black in shade, had christened him. It also gave him distinction amid the browns and bays and sorrels, his competitors. His colors, blue and orange, accented the dazzling sheen of Greysteel. Moreover, he moved with such precision, so marvelously well within himself, that more than one among the Mallon adherents, after looking him over, made haste, by way of hedging, to take a flyer on him. Therefore the odds tumbled—at post-time he was but a shade better than sixes. McKesson, noting it, felt that he had done well. Since he was bound to take long chances, it was wise to take them at their flood.

He did not watch the parade, which was almost perfunctory, as the Mallon following had things so much their own way. Here or there a rash enthusiast swung his hat, and shouted: "Greysteel!"—but only here and there. The other three entries were practically friendless—supernumeraries, as everybody understood. Schwarzbarger snorted as he heard the name of Greysteel.

"That's the two-dollar one—eh? Have you noticed it—the pikers always make the most noise? It's lucky they never get a real bet down—if they did, they'd spilt their throats—or else die of heart-failure if they happened to win."

Doris, recalling Schwarzbarger's antics, laughed outright—she could not help it. She had seen him win more than once, so she was not a whit surprised when, as the horses reached the post, he stood up, dragging her beside him, and stood with his eyes glued to

his glasses, puffing and swearing under breath, while the seven young things pranced back and forth, or swerved, or plunged, or stood on two feet instead of the normal four. "Conspiracy! Clear conspiracy!" Schwarzbarger howled at last. "Mallon's entry carries top weight—those others are leagued together to wear his horses out. I shall speak to the stewards about it. Upon my word, it's an outrage—a damnable outrage. You say they carry weight for age with winning penalties?"—this to a man at his elbow. "I know it, sir! That's part of the outrage. Colts should not incur winning penalties—they're—anarchistic—part of a plot to bring men and horses all to a dead level."

"You won't find many to agree with you," the man began, smiling.

"Shut up! They're off—at last," Schwarzbarger roared, flinging his free arm around Doris, as though fearing she might escape him while he watched the race. It was worth watching—as game and gallant a struggle as ever engaged flyers on four hoofs. From an even break, the seven young creatures were tearing down a long straight-away, barely heads apart, all through the half. It had been run in time that made the clockers stare. Therefore they were not surprised when, at the half, Wanton, the top weight, cracked it up, falling back an open length, with two of the three outsiders to keep her company. At the next furlong-pole, Fox Fire also was out of it—so was the third outsider. But Wilful ran strongly, straight and true as a bullet, a good half-length ahead of Greysteel.

"Wilful! You Wilful! Come on, I say! Come on!" Schwarzbarger screeched in his highest falsetto, executing the while a new pattern of war-dance—and as the colt increased his lead by a thought: "Good boy! I knew you'd do the trick! Show yourself! Now! Now! Now!"

Wilful was almost clear when Greysteel came again. With a stretching greyhound motion he locked the bay, regaining all that he had lost, then with strides so swift, so mighty, that the eye

could not follow them, low on the ground, yet hurtling over it, he forged ahead, and came to the wire an open length ahead of Mallon's pride. Doris would have fallen but for Schwarzbarger's supporting clasp. She put her hands over her face, not daring to believe what her eyes had seen. Schwarzbarger, crestfallen, patted her shoulder, saying: "There, there! Don't take it so hard! You know our bargain—I can pay for our dinner if we did lose. But it was disgusting. Suppose we go now. There won't be anything worth while after this."

"I—had rather—stay," Doris said faintly. Schwarzbarger looked at her keenly. "You don't suppose that chump, McKesson, had anything on that confounded mongrel?" he said, the question tentative. "Any sort of roan coat means a mongrel—I don't care how far the stud-book may take back the pedigree."

"Let's wait and ask him," Doris said—quite regardless of the fact that in strict grammar her answer referred to Greysteel rather than McKesson. She was tremulously happy—and wanted to be reassured. If indeed luck had turned, there was a chance of escape. She had not known quite the narrowness of McKesson's straits, but she had come close enough to understand what it meant when, half an hour later, he rejoined her with victorious eyes.

"Yes—I won. Nothing doing this time. Only the Steel Trust, or some other favorite of divine Providence, can afford to bet on a steeplechase," he said, in answer to Schwarzbarger's cross-examinings. Schwarzbarger grunted explosively. "Want to keep up your parlay? You ought to be game for a side bet. I'll lay you fifty to one you can't name the winner in the last race. Do you take me? For how much?"

"Oh! I reckon a thousand will be about right," McKesson said—and again there were drums in his ears. He knew it was wrong thus to crowd his luck—but Schwarzbarger had tempted him beyond resistance. Still, since he had to bet further, it was perhaps just

as well. Doris' time of grace was up to-morrow—by selling her stocks, with the sixteen thousand already in hand, they might pay principle and interest of her debt—yet how could he ask her to come to him when both would be virtually penniless? No—he must go on—and win or lose everything. So, while the jumpers ran and bumped and fell, and got up again, in such fashion that the rank outsider won hollowly, he sat through the waning light, poring over the entries for the last race, and wondering dully what would come first in the scramble.

Chance decided for him. On his way to the lawn, after the steeplechase was over, a tall man, hurrying away, bumped into him roundly, and said, with a smile and a gleam of white teeth through a thick mustache: "Pardon." Pardon was the name of a three-year-old, almost the least fancied of the horses about to race. But Pardon had nothing of class to beat—he was, moreover, almost wholly a dark horse. In three starts he had been third once, and twice a very bad last. Yet McKesson said to himself, after his encounter: "Pardon be it—although he can only win through blind, blundering, pure bull luck."

"Ho! ho! ho! That thousand will come in handy—to buy a solitaire for a lady we both know," Schwarzbarger exulted when he heard McKesson's choice. "You're a good boy, Mac—I was afraid you'd take Jewsharp. He's favorite—odds on—and it's a moral surety he can't lose."

"We shall see," McKesson said, trying hard not to speak unsteadily—but Doris caught the little shake in his voice, and put her hand impulsively into his. It was near sundown—many people had gone, and others were going. In the crepuscular light, the big, empty spaces of the stand and lawns looked ghostly. But still the regulars stood in rank at the rail, some few hanging over it, and all talking fragmentarily, if they spoke at all. Schwarzbarger had been shifting uneasily in his seat, but he had now come back to jollity. "Don't be cast down,

Mac," he said, slapping McKesson on the shoulder. "You shall go to dinner with us—lots of room in the bubble. And we'll pick up some pretty girl to keep you company, after we get to the Country Club. If they don't give us a swell feed there—well! they'll find out what it means to have me among the governors."

"I think they know already," McKesson said. Doris smiled covertly—it gave her heart to find that in this time of stress he could still fence cleverly. McKesson leaned across and said under breath: "I have everything down—except money enough to run away with you. Unless we win this time, it is either that, or—"

A look at Schwarzbarger finished the sentence. Doris clasped her hands tight. She wanted to cry aloud, to run away—after sitting rigidly for long, she felt leaden through and through. But she kept very still, and said nothing until the race was on. Then she asked McKesson quite clearly: "How does it feel to be a mile and a sixteenth away from a fortune?"

"Oh! But you're a joker. Don't rub it in," Schwarzbarger protested before McKesson could answer. In the dimming distance the start had been invisible—now, as the race swung into the back-stretch, they could see the five horses running almost as if harnessed abreast. At the half there was light enough to show Jewsharp in the rear and Pardon absolutely last. Schwarzbarger let out a choice whoop, and sprang up as though galvanized. He kept whooping and jumping up and down for a half-minute—then stopped short. Jewsharp was coming to the front with a rush—in a wink he had passed everything save Pardon, who hung to him gamely, and, as they swung into the stretch, forged half a length ahead. His jockey aimed to take the rail, where there was sounder, less hindering footing. But the boy on Jewsharp knew that as well—and meant equally to take advantage of it. He, too, bore in—there was a coming together, a caroming apart—then Jewsharp swept on ahead, and came to

the wire an open length to the good. Pardon was not disgraced—he held the place safe. But McKesson and Doris sat as though frozen—they had built their hopes so high, only to have them fall so low.

"So you don't know it quite all—this game of picking winners," Schwarzbarger began jubilantly. "But don't take it so to heart, man! You have only lost a thousand—and there'll be racing many other days. I'm glad to have cut your comb for you a little—conceit is mighty bad for a youngster such as you—"

"I must be going—as soon as I have settled with you," McKesson began—his back was to the course—he had not even glanced there since he saw the finish; the finish of all his hopes. He was practically beggared. If only he had stopped in time, there might have been a little chance. He looked at Doris, so slight, so fair, so appealingly tender; he looked at Schwarzbarger, big, burly, and overwhelming. But, at least, the man would be good to Doris—there was something almost paternal in the way he stood beside her, shielding her with his big bulk from the chill, rising wind. Schwarzbarger was not blind—withal, he was human. Perhaps he would not insist upon marriage until time and absence had a little dulled the edge and ache in Doris' heart. McKesson had some wild idea of speaking out—of appealing openly to Schwarzbarger to spare her thus—but something inside withheld him—he only stood, dumbly taking a roll of bills from his pocket, and beginning to run them over. Schwarzbarger waved him away. "To-morrow's time enough," he began—then as on second thought: "But if you insist upon it, why, wait till we see the winner's number." With that he wheeled about, then gave a loud cry. The winner's number was just going up—and it was Pardon's—Jewsharp being disqualified by a foul.

McKesson turned at the cry. After one glance he caught Doris in his arms, saying thickly over her shoulder to Schwarzbarger:

"This is what I most cared to win."



II. THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE

HIS name is used in the ordering of servants and the disciplining of children; he sits at the head of the table and he pays the bills, otherwise you would not know he was the Master of the House. That estimable woman, his wife, decides everything appertaining to the life of the home-circle, and conveys her decisions to him at such times and seasons as seem opportune in her eyes. If she anticipates objection, she does not tell him of the thing impending until it has become the thing accomplished. Thus she avoids discussion till it must of necessity be fruitless. If his co-operation is essential, she introduces her plan to his attention with such tact and subtlety that he can never be quite sure it was not his own.

He is regarded (remotely) as responsible for the family, is expected to care for its welfare, and provide for it as handsomely—indeed, sometimes more handsomely—than his means will allow. A Mild, if not an Admiring, Husband, an Inoffensive Father, an Excellent Provider; these are the qualities required of him in the American household of today. The fiery old type of Blusterer who bullyragged his wife, beat his children, and swore at his servants is no more. A very gentle phenix has risen from his ashes, and, in defiance of legendary lore, mated and settled down. A phenix who, however loudly he may

flap his wings and crow among his fellows in the market-place, usually comes home to roost with a tame tail and submissive crest.

For your family man is in general a quiet person. The fierceness of his energy has exhausted itself in the struggle to live and get the better of all others who are struggling to live and get the better of him in the battle-ground known as "down-town." He may be gloomy, or he may be querulous if things have gone against him, but that is the worst to be expected. No furies, no outbreaks—nothing, in fact, that a little sympathy, tact, and a good dinner cannot soothe.

There are exceptions, of course. All men are not men of affairs. There is the gentleman who stays at home and is particular about the details of everyday life; who is fanciful about the cooking, and fussy about having all the blinds pulled down to exactly the same level in the windows and making all the clocks to strike as one man. Who likes every book returned to its accustomed place, and prefers that the *real* writing-utensils should be kept in a drawer, while the unsullied beauty of the best portfolio reposes in state upon the table. But even he knows where his boundary-line is set.

There is the genius whose delicate nerves are set hopelessly a-jangle by a loud laugh or a sharply closing door. Whose wife's knitting-needles may not click in his presence, and whose children must fly to the garret if they want

to cough. Who cannot sleep if there is a ray of light in the room or a particle of sound outside it. Whose vanity must be kept warm and whose comfort needs constant cushioning. Who is petted and borne with and shown off like a spoiled child.

Then there are gentlemen of sporting instincts who come home only every now and again to sleep; sailors and travelers who hardly darken their own doors. But for the most part the married man who owns a house and lot and has a family is a creature of regular habits and peaceable disposition, asking only amiable looks in return for his toil, and perfectly satisfied with the passive position—the attitude of non-interference in home matters that has been gradually assigned to him. The business end of life is his end, whether he is a mill-hand or a millionaire. In regard to anything outside his domain, he will refer you to the proper authority, and whether he answers simply: "I guess mother has the say," or, with a certain pomp: "I leave all such details to my wife," the result is about the same. What he means is: "This is not my province." And it is not. Whatever it might have been, it is, nowadays, distinctly not.

Men who assert themselves in the domestic sphere are comparatively few and far between. Whether it is in the houses of the "plethoric rich" or the "worthy poor," as has been said, the woman manages. The Provider provides, and the Manager arranges and dispenses. *She* draws the raw green-back from the bank and turns it into food and raiment, all sorts and varieties of food and raiment—into furniture, into "goods and chattels," cottages and castles, lands and gardens. When it comes to flocks and herds, he, if his tastes happen to be bucolic, may have a word or two to say, but he is not unapt to do a certain amount of consulting first, whereas, his better half has probably become accustomed from long habit to act for herself. I have very little doubt that the Adam of to-day (only there are very few men left in these nervous times who deserve the name of

that primal and elementary person) that the Adam of to-day would leave the naming of the animals to his efficient Eve, and, turning upon his elbow, would murmur: "Let's have a look at the stock-market," as he retired behind the leaves of his evening paper. And Eve, undeterred by the responsibility, would christen each beast, as it approached, with the utmost promptness and decision, between afternoon tea-time and the dinner dressing hour. After selecting, among a hundred appellations, those best suited to her own progeny, after settling upon the girls' nurses and governesses, and determining where the boys shall go to school and college, the mere ticketing of a lot of other people's inventions must be as child's play to a capable woman.

How far this withdrawal of man from any active part in domestic affairs is a good thing may be questioned. Specialization of interests and cares keeps him young, and it is no uncommon thing to see, in a middle-aged couple, the masculine face smooth and the feminine fretted by many lines. But the household may not be benefited by the exclusive government of even the wisest of petticoats. It may not be well for Tom that "papa" is guarded from the knowledge of his latest misdemeanor, or for papa, himself, that it has little by little come to be understood that he is to be "bothered about nothing when he comes home tired." It may be his own fault, because the justice he metes out when overfatigued is not sufficiently tempered by mercy, or it may be his wife's fault because she is too desirous of saving him all share in home discomforts, or because she prefers, herself, to stand preeminent, dominating each situation as it arises—but for one reason or another the Rulers of the Fireside and the Field, the Drawing-room, and the Office, conduct the concerns of their kingdoms in perfect mutual independence.

I have a vague remembrance of a somewhat feeble-minded young man who informed me with artless confidence that a father was the person who "gave you advice and told you about

putting your boots out to be blacked, and not blowing out the gas, etc., etc." This remarkable parent must have belonged to another age. Who can imagine a modern suburban father disseminating advice while dashing to catch his train of a morning, or a city magnate distracting his mind from the sophisticated perils of his last mighty "deal" to deliver lectures upon dirty boots or the deadly effects of blown-out gas?

Yet, in the long run, the making of men is more important than the making of money, and the father who does not give the time and take the trouble to be intimate with his children does them and himself an injury. Non-interference is carried too far when a man disassociates himself never so amiably from home interests, or a husband loses touch with his wife; and yet this state of things is common enough in American families of all classes, especially as the parents get a little on in years. The life of the mother and children on one side, and the life of the father on the other. How often do you hear the most admirable middle-aged ladies confiding to each other, one, that she has had to add a wing to her country house but has not mentioned it to Mr. A. because it would "fret him"; he sees no necessity for enlargement, not realizing that "the boys" have grown up. Another, that she means to spend the next six months abroad with "the girls," but has not yet broken it to "John," because he doesn't care about traveling himself and doesn't see why they should. And I recall with pleasure the remarks of a most respectable old family nurse, who had married the butler of the establishment and was about to separate from him on account of his bibulous habits:

"Taking them by and large" (the butler was extremely large, but very seldom by) "they're all the same, deary, and that's different from us. It ain't no use expecting them to feel as we do, for they ain't got it in them. I've showed him the error of his ways till I'm sick and tired; and now I says, says I: 'You come back once again

with *something taken'*" (this delicate phrase, being interpreted, meaning, "in an intoxicated condition") "and you'll not get in this door never no more. Mind that!"

Of course there are wives whose demure: "William won't let me," and, "I'm afraid Clarence wouldn't like it," are dutifully delightful to the ear of the listener, but it is generally to be conceded that if the slaves of William and Clarence intended them to like or permit a thing, in nine cases out of ten that thing would be liked and permitted. Men do not apply an even pressure of reasonable authority at home. They are, for the most part, easy-going, with a slight tendency to be right at inauspicious moments and to assert themselves in the wrong places. That is, if you can accept the testimony of those disinterested ladies who have promised (as far as possible) to "love, honor, and obey" them. But whether the testimony is from outside or inside, it would seem to show that in these days a man is more than willing to regard all home management as essentially "out of his department."

Once upon a time, though, there was an old man from the West (where they breed closer to the original, unregenerate male type) who nearly died from a belated attempt to set his foot down and maintain, in a certain emergency, a predominance that had at one time been his among his family, and for which he was still renowned in all dealings with his fellows.

He was a son of the soil, and, being bold among men, had naturally gravitated toward the gentlest and most dependent of women. In the young days of their life together they had known a goodly amount of not unhappy hardship. She had cooked and washed, kept the house and herself and her babies safe—sometimes at the point of the rifle—from harm. She could recollect once hiding in the corn from the scattered remnant of a wandering band of Indians. He, either prospecting for himself or working for more successful men, came back at night

frantically anxious for the first sight of her, ready to play with the children, knock together bits of furniture for the hut, and eagerly discuss every detail of the past twenty-four hours and the next day's possible luck. The luck that was to be their fortune! Living the life of the wilds, they shared every hope, fear, expectation, disappointment, interest, pleasure. Together they brought up their children, he shaping and she smoothing, more wisely patriarchial than they dreamed. And if she had learned to be courageous it was for "*him and his.*" And if he never let his determination falter it was for "*her and them.*"

Then the luck came, and the gold was crossed, and the mine found, and the fortune made. He became at one bound a "successful man," at another, a great financier. One of the first things he did when he descended (in a golden shower) on the nearest great town, was to buy an enormous house and put aside an enormous sum of money for "*her and them.*" Then he felt free to plunge into whatever schemes and speculations recommended themselves to him, and everything he touched, in his own language, "turned up trumps." But also every thought of his head and his heart became absorbed in the mighty game he was playing—for *himself*, now, since *they* were provided for—and never did it occur to him for a moment that he was not fulfilling, and more than fulfilling, the whole duty of a man. Had he not placed his family magnificently beyond the reach of want? He regarded the separation of his huge financial interests from their domestic and social ones as natural and entirely unavoidable; and it never suggested itself to him that, under the now almost superficial intercourse existing between him and them he was quite as much a stranger to their hopes and interests, their schemes and speculations, as they were to his.

Therefore, it was a great shock to him when one day a friend addressed him genially with: "Well, Peter, I hear your folks is going to locate East,"

and when, on going home and confronting his "folks," he found himself in turn confronted by almost grown-up children with altogether settled plans and a mother whose will, since it had ceased to be his, had become theirs. He had made them independent of him in more things than money. His sons wished to go to Eastern colleges, his daughter to "come out" in New York. They explained their reasons to him, he thundered out objections; they met the objections with admirable argument, he had recourse to threats; they could afford to ignore the threats, and did so. He saw his own dominant characteristics arrayed against him, and his old influence gone.

He was no more the man that had come whooping and hollooing through the orange sunsets, warm-hearted and single-minded, than they were the woman and children that had waited and watched for his coming as the thing most to be desired in their day. He was a fat, furious, old, deposed king, who had showed himself indifferent to ruling his household, and they were rightfully(?) rebellious subjects bent upon ruling for themselves.

It was all a tempest in a teapot, but it cost the nominal head of the family a fit of severe illness, and robbed the younger members of a portion of their inheritance. The last I heard of them they were still living apart, and still apparently undesirous of a reconciliation. He, violent, unforgiving, lonely; she, meekly subservient to the demands of the life her children had fashioned for her.

Which all goes to prove (what has hitherto been my unexpressed belief) that there isn't any "Master of the House" nowadays.

Modern life is complicated and harassing, and, in this country at least, that great monster, Business, gobbles up the best hours of its victims best years. Yet surely the most important thing on earth is still the relation of people to each other, and the "business instinct" but ill adapts a man to be the guide and companion of the woman he marries and the friend and adviser of

the children that are his. It does not enlarge his sympathies, nor cultivate his tastes, nor broaden his point of view. If he does not fight against it, it narrows him down to the eternal dollars-and-cents struggle, continued long after all necessities have been satisfied, till by the time he has achieved leisure he no longer knows what to do with it. And meantime he has lost the enjoyment of the simple, natural things. For of all good gifts to be snatched from Fate, Companionship comes first.

Right was the poet who sang of

"Home, and the love of wedded wife and child" as the most complete happiness. And very much mistaken am I if those Greek heroes and Roman warriors, to whom, and of whom, he sang felt it "outside their department" to interest themselves in the qualities of their wives, the welfare of their retainers, and, above all, in the responsibility of bringing up children—of giving good citizens to the State—healthily wise and noble boys and girls. This in peace or war, business or pleasure, might well be the concern of "the Master of the House."



A PRAIRIE SONG

OH, music springs under the galloping hoofs,
Out on the plains;
Where mile after mile drops behind with a smile,
And to-morrow seems always to tempt and beguile,
Out on the plains.

Oh, where are the traces of yesterday's ride?
There to the north;
Where alfalfa and sage sigh themselves into sleep,
Where the buttes loom up suddenly, startling and steep,
There to the north.

Oh, rest not, my pony, there's youth in my heart,
Out on the plains;
And the wind sings a wild song to rob me of care,
And there's room here to live and to love and to dare,
Out on the plains.

CLAIRE WALLACE FLYNN.

The IMPORTANCE of BEING EARNEST

*Constance & Pearl
Smedley Humphrey*

ET, gray mist lay over a November landscape, and a stillness more magical than that of a summer noon, because more mysterious, held in cold fingers the bare, brown trees and hedges, the road that wound wetly among them, and the pearl-gray country that stretched beneath a brooding sky. The voices and laughter of a merry party of riders supplied the human note. Nelly, riding ahead with a young subaltern, was in the highest spirits. It was the first house-party she had stayed at alone, and she youthfully regarded the absence of Mrs. Martin's ægis as a removal of a barrier rather than the withdrawal of a protection. She had arrived only that morning, and had immediately proclaimed her freedom from restraint by rooting her habit out of her trunk, leaving everything else in the trays, and coming out for a ride when she should undoubtedly have been resting after an early start.

To this pleasant emancipation was now added the joy of a subject on which she held views which she felt to be sensible and worthy of discussion. This was bridge, a game on which the subaltern happened to be rather keen; but he was listening to the pretty iconoclast with much interest and some amusement. Nelly, who had not arrived at the stage fever of even a tolerable player, was not deterred by this fact from

delivering herself as one who speaks with authority.

"It is bridge, bridge, bridge!" she said, "and the cry is as irritating as when 'with Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods.' They're probably playing it now, and they'll go on all the evening, and the same to-morrow. Conversation is a dead art; music in the house is dying; dancing is neglected."

"Oh, well," interpolated the subaltern, "bridge is better than gossip."

Nelly cast a somewhat stricken thought over the conversation anent mutual friends with which she and the subaltern had beguiled the earlier part of the ride.

"Gossip is very enlightening," she remarked, driven to defend it by a prickling conscience. "How is one to gain experience if not by talking?"

The subaltern grinned widely, being too young himself to feel merciful toward her extreme youth.

"Some women manage to," he answered. "Just the same, there are several advantages about a game like bridge. It's like Freemasonry or the Diplomatic; it has a secret language, and it brings people together, or separates them," he added, in a parenthesis. "But it gives you a certain position, you know, if you can talk about the new Queen call, and that kind of thing, when the ordinary bridge-player has never heard of it."

"All that may be very true," observed Nelly, "but people do take it so fearfully seriously. There's no fun

where they are all bridge-ites. After all, a game is but a game."

"I should like to hear you tell that to old Lady Faljohnson," rejoined the subaltern.

"Why not?" said Nelly. "I will, if you like."

As they rode on, the idea matured in her mind. They laughed and talked of all the possibilities of free speech till they reached home, and left the ghostly twilight outside. The gaiety of freedom was on her, and she was so radiant through dinner that she laid for herself the foundation-stone of a very pleasant popularity. When they rose, and went into the card-room, which they did as a matter of course, Nelly observed Lady Faljohnson, Mrs. Kex, her hostess, and Major Dalsey, consulting as to whom they should invite for their fourth, *vice* a very fine player, departed. Nelly, who had watched the manners and customs of the devotees, knew exactly how much eagerness and how much self-confidence to put into her expression. She reflected that no one there knew how she played, and the alertness of her face caught Mrs. Kex's eye. She strolled over to the trio.

"Do you play the new Queen call?" asked Nelly, with a careless smile, whereupon they said: "Oh, yes," in delighted tones, and unanimously invited her to join them. As she sat down with the three best players in the county, her heart sank a little, but the subaltern, passing in through the billiard-room door, threw her a smile which cheered her again.

She fell to the major as partner, and he had the declare. He left it to Nelly, who gaily declared no trumps. Some surprise appeared upon the major's face, but as the play went on, a thunderous silence descended on the group. When the score had been recorded, he turned to Nelly. "May I ask why you declared no trumps?" he asked, with arctic politeness.

"Why," responded Nelly, "I had no suit to make trumps, and nothing higher than a queen in my hand."

"Couldn't you have declared spades?" demanded the major.

"I had only three little ones, and spades are so dull," was his partner's rejoinder. These reasons, given in her clear, young voice, fell upon so utter a silence that the subaltern heard them in the billiard-room, whence he immediately strolled, bearing the *Pink 'Un*.

In the second hand the situation became even tenser; the only sounds in the room besides the flip of the cards being Nelly's bright prattle, and the excited whispers of the spectators, who had been attracted by her convincing reason for declaring no trumps because her hand was so bad.

At last the livid major leaped into speech, immediately on Nelly's gay, "I double."

"Do you know what you're doing?"

"Oh, yes," answered Nelly. "But don't look so concerned. After all, it's only a game of chance, and you can't tell how the cards will go."

"Then you ought to, madam!" retorted the major, in a voice the subaltern had often heard.

"Hard lines, major!" murmured a sympathetic voice.

Nelly looked up. "But it's only a game of pleasure," she said. "It isn't as if it's a serious business, that mattered at all to any one. What is bridge but a game?"

"Please don't talk," detonated Lady Faljohnson.

The subaltern telegraphed encouragement. The major and Nelly were now losing consistently and thoroughly, and the atmosphere was distinctly electric.

"Is it true," said Nelly, with genuine thoughtlessness, and, indeed, with the object of starting an interesting subject which might dispel the somewhat constrained silence, "that girls are lured by experienced players to join them, and then are fleeced? One hears such ridiculous stories about hostesses not letting girls know what stakes they are playing for."

This remark was addressed to Lady Faljohnson, who had laid down her cards with the expression of one who has abandoned hope. Before she could

reply, Nelly, quite unintentionally, pointed her malapropos remark to the most pronounced degree by adding: "By the way, how much are we playing for? Half-crown points?"

"Five pounds," said the major, with exceeding brevity.

"Oh, good gracious!" exclaimed Nelly. "May I look at the score?" Her face fell as she scanned it, and every one began to feel even more uncomfortable than cross. "Now I must really begin to attend to my cards," she said, and picked them up somewhat concernedly.

It was her call, and the hand resulted in a grand slam in diamonds for their opponents. Nelly seemed to take more comfort than the major in the fact that she had doubled only twice.

"This shall be the last hand," said Mrs. Kex, in veiled consolation to the major. As the cards were dealt, Nelly excelled all previous faux pas.

"I don't know what Mrs. Martin will say when she is asked to pay all this to you," she said, in perfect good nature, and, indeed, seeing the subject in quite a humorous light. She would have expected an answer, only that she was cut short by a call of hearts, which she promptly doubled. It was redoubled, and she followed suit. This pastime continued till the limit was reached, by which time the major was entirely overcome.

By the fortune of war, however, and the extraordinary distribution of the cards, Nelly held nothing in her hand but hearts and some good spades, and not even her own bad play could prevent her and the major from romping in with five to the good. This, totaled up, just evened the score, and fanned into intense dislike the brooding resentment of Lady Faljohnson and Mrs. Kex. Nelly's ingenuous triumph was as oil on the flame.

"So jolly it being the last hand! It is so much more comfortable to leave off even," she said gaily. "Taking money is so horrid. If one is the hostess, it is like making the guests pay for their board and lodging; and if one is the guest, it is like plundering the hostess. I suppose the nicest way is to

play for the fun of the game. I wish those people who talk about bridge being a strain on the temper, could see us! People say bridge-players are never able to leave off. Why, it's only half-past ten now."

"I am sure it is time for such young girls to go to bed," said Mrs. Kex, with hard-won kindness.

Nelly took this hint in some astonishment, and said good night. The subaltern opened the door for her, and came out into the hall, where he allowed his cumulated merriment to double him against the wall.

"You have a nerve!" he gasped, in answer to Nelly's expression.

"What do you mean?" she said, honestly surprised. "The major was rather cross at first, but you see we won in the end. I must say I'm amazed I've got out of it so well!"

"Yes, that was the climax! How long are you staying? Because I should advise you to write home and ask to be telegraphed for."

"Why?" demanded Nelly, in absolute stupefaction.

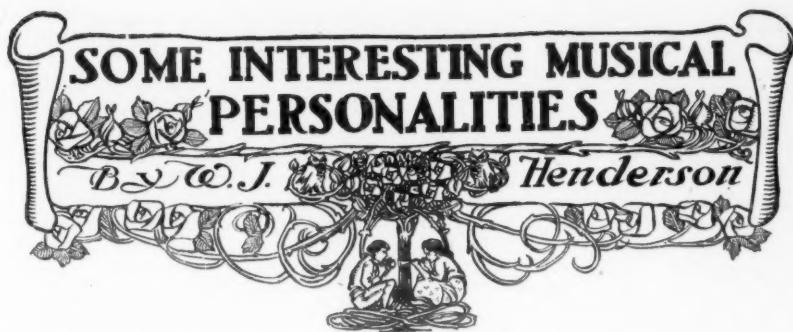
"Well, after your remarks about fleecing!" He saw her blank face. "Do you mean to say you don't know about the scandal at Lady Faljohnson's last year? She hasn't been to court since. Nina Perritt was practically ruined by her ladyship, who insisted on the money; the poor girl's father was a half-pay officer and hadn't got a shilling, and she went off with Jabez Marks, the only man who would get her out of it. Then every one knows that Major Dalsey lives by bridge, and Mrs. Kex for it (that's why Lady F.'s here); so you've been rubbing it in all round. You won't be asked here again in a hurry."

The subaltern subsided against the wall, and shrieked again.

Nelly turned suddenly and ran upstairs with a sick feeling at her heart. Lady Faljohnson's looks, the major's wrath, her hostess' polite hint of bedtime; she understood them all now. As she subsided into bed, with bitter penitence, she realized a useful lesson—the importance of being earnest when your hostess is

SOME INTERESTING MUSICAL PERSONALITIES

By W. J. Henderson



THE current musical season has already produced much of large and permanent interest. This will remain for future pundits to discuss and elucidate. But while music remains, either in living actuality before the public ear or entombed in the literary catacombs of the libraries, men and women come and go, and are seen and heard not again this side of what Carlyle calls "oblivious Lethe." Perhaps, therefore, it will not be amiss at this time to make passing note of some of the distinguished figures which have flitted across the musical canvas, and to tell something of what they have done. Unfortunately, the record, by reason of periodical limitations, cannot be brought quite up to date.

The first imposing figure that strode upon the stage of musical activity was that of a composer. Early in October, Ruggiero Leoncavallo gave three concerts in Carnegie Hall, and then went touring out into the West; out into the West as his pride went down. Leoncavallo is known to Americans as the composer of an intensely passionate and tragic little one-act work called "Pagliacci." All opera-goers are familiar with this work, and one of their favorite diversions is observing Enrico Caruso in the act of agonizing through the solo at the end of the first scene.

Mr. Leoncavallo's plan was not of

the kind that commends itself to American lovers of music. He came with an orchestra announced as that of La Scala Theater, in Milan, but obviously of much lower quality, and several singers of the kind to be found in the wreck of every wandering Italian company that makes its way into New York after meeting with disaster in South America or Mexico. With this organization he gave concerts made up of extracts from his operas, of which he has produced far too many. Naturally, the enterprise met with little favor in New York, and the composer with his company speedily took himself to regions where the absurdity of the operatic concert is less obvious than it is here.

Mr. Leoncavallo, apparently, said all that he had to say when he composed "Pagliacci," but, doubtless, if his other operas could be properly performed here with all the aid of scenery and action, we should get a different impression from that made by the concerts. The composer himself won friends by his modest, sincere demeanor. He bore himself as an artist. He was probably misled as to musical conditions in this country, or he would have presented himself to us through a different medium.

Leoncavallo was followed upon the Carnegie Hall stage by that generous figure of a woman, Ernestine Schumann-Heink, who gave a song recital on October 20. Every one was glad to see her once more decently clad and in

her right mind. Whether it was the success of *Fritzi Scheff* or the seductions of the cunning manager that led her away from the path of artistic rectitude will probably remain a secret within her own generous breast, but she had had her fling in the realm of operetta, and seemed to be satisfied. It was in opera that Mme. Schumann-Heink showed a command of skill as a comic actress. On the operetta stage she was laborious and heavy, and her huge voice could not be made to fit into the gossamer scores of the works prepared for her. Of course, she could hardly be blamed for trying to make more money, for she has a large family. Between the care of children and the interpretation of Wagnerian rôles she has an arduous existence. However, on the concert platform she can easily earn enough to eke out the scanty salary of an operatic contralto. Her voice is as good as ever it was, and she sings with all her old-time earnestness.

Early in November, Evan Williams gave a song recital in Mendelssohn Hall. This entertainment had a strong personal interest for those who knew the inner history. Mr. Williams was a Welsh miner out in the Pennsylvania district, where singing is the chief avocation of these workmen. Any one who has been at an Eisteddfod, or Welsh artistic festival, can tell wonderful stories about the voices and natural musical gifts of these people. Mr. Williams was one of their stars, and he understood the serious study of singing. He had plenty of success, but somehow every little while he would break down and his voice would depart to regions unknown.

At one time he went into retirement for two seasons and studied, in the hope of acquiring a new method. His appearance last November was after one of his disappointing experiences. He was to demonstrate that once more he was in the pink of vocal condition, and that, furthermore, he had acquired new powers. His recital was in one respect successful. It showed that he had fully regained command of his voice, and he sang some of his old bat-

tle-horses as well as he ever did. That he had acquired any new skill or insight did not appear.

By far, the most interesting musical personality disclosed in November was that of Camille Saint-Säens, the celebrated French composer, a master who for forty years has enjoyed the admiration of the musical world. Saint-Säens made his bow as the guest of Walter Damrosch at a concert of the New York Symphony Society. A short, dapper gentleman, wearing his seventy years with inimitable French elegance, he made a most agreeable impression on the audience as soon as he was visible. He was accorded a reception such as a foreign musician seldom has from the slow-feeling New Yorker.

Evidently he had no true notion of the state of musical taste in this country, for he elected to perform as his introductory number a piano fantasia, which he composed many years ago when Cambridge University made him a Doctor of Music. He played it admirably, but it was hardly worth the trouble. He played also two other insignificant piano compositions, and the orchestra, under Mr. Damrosch, performed the composer's popular symphonic poem, "Le Rouet d'Omphale." The tenor of the newspaper comments the following morning undoubtedly opened the eyes of the distinguished visitor, for it was immediately announced that he and Mr. Damrosch would give two additional concerts, at which the program would be composed entirely of important works by Saint-Säens.

Of course the eminent musician had nothing new to offer, but it was interesting to hear some of his well-known compositions at first hand, as it were. M. Saint-Säens is a most interesting personality. He has composed in every department of music, and has won the enthusiastic praise of such artists as Wagner, Gounod, and Von Bülow. Wagner called him the greatest living French composer, which at the time was undeniably true. Von Bülow was dazed by his acquaintance with the music of all schools and all nations.

But Saint-Säens is not only a composer. He has written many admirable essays on music and musicians. Some years ago he collected all these, and published them in a volume entitled "Harmonie et Melodie." A considerable part of that work was taken up with a review of Wagner's "Der Ring des Nibelungen," in regard to which the author spoke with warm enthusiasm. It so happened, however, that his commendation and that of some others led to the frequent performance of Wagner's music at Parisian concerts, whereupon M. Saint-Säens suddenly discovered that he was not such a great admirer of Wagner, after all.

This composer has, like Silas Wegg, occasionally dropped into poetry. But whereas Mr. Wegg's muse was most prosaic, Mr. Saint-Säens writes with piquant grace, charm, satirical humor, and literary quality. One of the sources of his inspiration was Mme. Pauline Viardot-Garcia, the famous daughter of Manuel Garcia, the old-time singer, and herself one of the most adorable sopranos of her time. Her art always deeply moved Saint-Säens. He was apparently angered, too, by the inability of Parisians to perceive the beauty of Bizet's opera, "Djamileh," and he penned a neat little bit of satirical verse on that topic. Taken altogether, Saint-Säens has been one of the most interesting figures of a busy musical season.

Another musician who unites skill in his own art with literary talent and a wit of the most fluent kind is Moritz Rosenthal, the Rumanian pianist, who is here on another visit. Rosenthal was once requested to read the score of a new piano concerto, carried to him by the ambitious composer, who hoped that the great pianist would be inclined to perform it. Rosenthal played the music through carefully, and then said solemnly to the composer: "Colossal! You are the only composer in the world who can write a whole piano concerto without an idea."

This was years ago; but the old wit is just as active as ever. It was the fortune of the present writer to meet the pianist at luncheon soon after his

recent arrival in New York. The house was an old-fashioned one, and the ceiling of the dining-room was low. The host made some jesting remark about the lowness of this ceiling, whereupon Rosenthal, who speaks excellent English, said: "In a dining-room with such a low ceiling, I suppose you can eat nothing but fried soles."

Rosenthal made his reappearance in an orchestral concert at Carnegie Hall. He played Chopin's "E Minor Concerto" with the same beauty of style and bursts of brilliancy as he used to play it. He performed Liszt's "E Flat Concerto" admirably, filling it with color and life. But his greatest achievement was his execution of Brahms' variations on a theme by Paganini. This appallingly difficult composition he dashed off at a terrific speed, thundering off its complicated passages as if they were simple scales. It was a most prodigious technical feat. Rosenthal is indeed a giant of the keyboard, and will continue to attract public attention despite the fact that he does not seem to possess any of the profounder attributes of the interpretative artist.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra came to town in November with a new conductor, Doctor Carl Muck, the successor of Wilhelm Gericke, who retired at the close of last season. Doctor Muck is the associate of Richard Strauss, the famous composer, in conducting the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, and is absent on leave for a year. He conducted the Wagner festivals at Bayreuth for several seasons, and stands high in the favor of that remarkable woman, Frau Cosima Wagner, widow of the great master. Doctor Muck proved to be in some ways a comforting relief to the shattered nerves of music-lovers. Conductors in these days have come to be prima donnas of the baton, and they give themselves many airs and graces, and expect to have the lime-light of public attention focused on them rather than on the music which they interpret.

Doctor Muck, on the contrary, effaces himself in a marked manner. He

is a distinguished-looking man, with the keen, smooth, aquiline face of a Roman, and the elegant, slender figure of a Frenchman. He bears himself with polished dignity, and faces an audience with polite modesty. His conducting is not at all spectacular. Those who believe that orchestral directors magnetize orchestras at the instant of performance instead of preparing them by studious rehearsal, will be likely to miss most of the finest effects which Doctor Muck obtains with his quiet beat and his retiring style. He is a scholarly director, not a sensationalist. His reading of Beethoven's "Fifth Symphony" at the first concert was admirable, while in Wagner's "Eine Faust" overture, he demonstrated that when passionate outbursts of music were demanded he was not to be found wanting. His great *tour de force* was with Brahms' "C Minor Symphony" at the matinée concert.

Diametrically the opposite of Doctor Muck is Wassily Safonoff, the conductor of the Philharmonic Society of New York, whose swarthy complexion is the setting for a pair of burning eyes, sheltered by bushy brows, and whose two hands, devoid of the customary baton, weave a wilderness of picturesque gestures for the excitement of the audience, and perhaps also for the information of the orchestra. Two conductors of such opposite types afford food for a study of musical temperaments, for both are certainly artists, and to those who listen with their ears instead of with their eyes, both are highly interesting.

One of the most pleasing visitors of the season is Doctor Otto Neitzel, music critic of the Cologne *Zeitung*. In Germany they usually get professional musicians to be music critics for their newspapers. In this country, newspaper men are employed for this department. Perhaps this may explain why things are so different. But of course the conditions are by no means the same, and the American newspaper wants first of all the news. Doctor Neitzel, then, is a musician who has at last come to writing for a newspaper.

He was and, for the matter of that still is, a pianist; a very good one, too. Furthermore, he has had an abundance of experience in teaching, and he is a thoroughly sound and well-schooled musician. He has even composed an opera, and, what is more, has got it produced, and, what is still more, has found it popular.

He came to America to give a series of lecture recitals; that is, lectures on musical topics with illustrations played on the piano. He himself was to do the playing. Now the true nature of his undertaking will be understood when it is known that this man, who had never lived in an English-speaking country, who had learned English from books while dwelling in such an essentially German city as Cologne, purposed to address American audiences in their own tongue. Just as he was about to sail, his manager telegraphed him from this side that he ought to begin his series with a lecture on the "Salomé" of Richard Strauss, which is to be produced this month at the Metropolitan Opera-House. He prepared the lecture on the steamer, finishing it after he had landed on this side, and he delivered it with telling effect before a large audience. His English was indeed labored in utterance, but not the least so in style. On the contrary, he struck out some fine literary phrases, and talked picturesquely and with flashes of charming humor. Furthermore, he played the tremendously difficult music most excellently.

Doctor Neitzel was subsequently heard as assisting pianist at one of the concerts of the Kneisel Quartet, and here again he made a most favorable impression. It is not often that we have a visitor of this type. We get scores of instrumental virtuosi and famous singers, not to speak of star conductors, but a musical scholar, critic, and lecturer from Europe is by way of being a novelty. When he is such an interesting novelty as Doctor Neitzel, he is indeed welcome.

Henry Savage, the enterprising manager of operatic performances in English, produced Puccini's "Madam But-

terfly" at the Garden Theater on November 12. This opera was the sensation of London in the summer of 1905, and had also a successful introduction in Italy. It made a smaller stir in Germany, where "Manon Lescaut" is still accepted as the composer's best creation. "Madam Butterfly" is founded on a little drama written by John Luther Long and David Belasco, the first of the Japanese tragedies to awaken interest in the American theater. In the opera, the story is expanded to occupy two acts, and operatic acts, at that.

The result is that the action is spun out rather thin. But of course it is possible to dwell pretty long on any given situation with the aid of music. For example, when Blanche Bates acted the title rôle of the original play, she made an extraordinary effect in the scene of waiting for the return of the sailor husband by simply crouching with her face at the window and doing nothing at all. It was a wonderful demonstration of the potency of silence in the acted drama. In the lyric version this situation is filled with descriptive orchestral music, and it is here that Puccini achieves one of his most striking climaxes.

Again, when *Cio-Cio San* slays herself and falls upon the body of her child, the composer accompanies speechless action with eloquent music. It is perhaps in episodes of this kind that the operatic "Madam Butterfly" is at its best. The stream of vocal melody is very tenuous. Puccini appears to have been almost too prodigal of melodic ideas in his "La Bohème," for he had not many left in his imagination when he came to compose this Japanese story. The method of Wagner in fashioning thematic fragments to represent the principal thoughts and characters in the drama is followed in this work, but Puccini had already utilized it in previous operas. In "Butterfly," however, he has used it with a higher technic and a more sensitive fancy. He has shown great skill and patience in the working out of the themes in his elaborate score. The in-

strumentation is extremely rich and closely knit. It is not brilliant or powerful, for the nature of the subject forbids that. It is subtle, complex, rich, and subdued, like the texture of a fine old, Oriental rug.

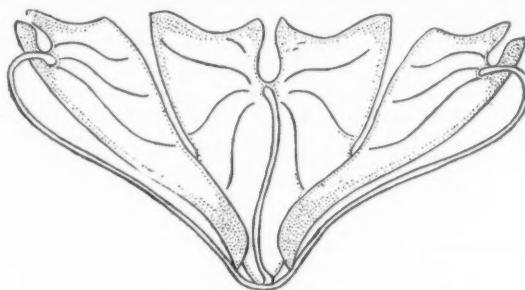
For the singers there is no great opportunity for display. "Butterfly" is a one-part opera. *Cio-Cio San* has to carry the largest part of the burden on her fair shoulders. If she could carry it all by standing close to the foot-lights and singing in the old-fashioned Italian opera style, her task would be comparatively light; but the modern sons of Italy do not compose in this manner. They are nothing if not introspective and analytical, and hence much of *Cio-Cio San's* impersonation must be carefully wrought out histrionically. The ideal lyric artist for this rôle, were she somewhat less imposing in physical stature, would be that gifted and eccentric singer, Emma Calvé. Mr. Savage could hardly be expected to provide a thousand-dollar prima donna at popular prices. He presented a fairly competent singer in Mme. Samoszy, a Hungarian. That old and tried exponent of opera of the Castle Square brand, Joseph Sheehan, displayed again his good voice in the rôle of *Pinkerton*, the American naval lieutenant who won the love of the little Japanese girl. This same opera is to be brought out later in the season at Mr. Conried's establishment with an American singer, Geraldine Farrar, in the title rôle. It seems a pity that for the Italian version an English-speaking songstress had to be employed, while for the English text there was requisitioned an unaccustomed Hungarian tongue.

S. Coleridge-Taylor, an English composer, gave a concert of his own compositions in Mendelssohn Hall toward the middle of the month of November. Interest in this writer is increased by the fact that he is of African origin. He had colored artists to aid him at his concert. It is perhaps not generally known, but there are in New York several thoroughly trained singers of dark skin. Coleridge-Taylor acquired much of his note from his setting of Long-

fellow's "Hiawatha." His concert was attended by a goodly audience, partly drawn by curiosity, of course, but ready in its recognition of the good features of the entertainment.

At the time of this writing the opera season at the Metropolitan is just opening, and therefore discussion of its sig-

nificant incidents must be postponed till later. It is still believed that Strauss' "Salomé" will be the sensation of the winter, probably because, as it is said, some parts of it are the most wonderfully hideous music ever conceived by the mind of man. Thus does musical art get new ideas from Ibsenism.



A CREOLE LULLABY

OUT of the silvery, tropical night
Charged with the sweetness of jasmine and rose,
The song of a mocking-bird, mad with delight,
Trembles and halts and exultantly grows;
Shy little baby stars winking with fright
Cling to the edge of the luminous night,
And rocked in a cradle of shadow and light
Soft little southern winds whisper and blow—
Little François, by-low, by-low!

Black are the eyes that are yours, little son,
Black as the bayou the moon watches now;
Your hair is a shadow of shadow which spun
Out of the midnight and circled your brow.
Creep closer, creep closer, for swift as a thought
The dream-boat is coming to bear us apart,
Oh, breath of my body and heart of my heart!
Serene be the visions your slumber shall know—
Little François, by-low, by-low!

Dear little baby one, softly the breeze
Blows in your drowsy eyes, kisses your mouth;
Fragrant magnolias swing high in the trees
Dreaming their dreams of the beautiful South;
Hushed is the mocker—the world is asleep,
Slumber, my little one, sweetly and deep,
Maman will guard you and softly repeat
Prayers to the saints to watch over you, so
Little François, by-low, by-low!

ELLA BENTLEY.

PLAYS AND PLAYERS

A FIRST NIGHTER

Shakespeare's dramas stale and decadent. The critics bored by "Pippa Passes." Timely drama is the cry of the hour. Langdon Mitchell in "The New York Idea" out-Shaws Shaw. "The Daughters of Men" not an example of effective playwriting. "The Man of the Hour" essentially a man's play. Miss Frances Starr wins a real triumph in "The Rose of the Rancho." "Neptune's Daughter" at the Hippodrome brings us face to face with fairyland

In a recent interview, Bronson Howard, the "dean" of American dramatists, bitterly complained that were Sheridan alive to-day he could not induce any manager to present "School for Scandal." Mr. Howard states the case exactly, but the condition he laments warrants congratulation rather than condolence. "School for Scandal" would be rejected in this enlightened twentieth century by any manager of discretion, because it no longer is a good play. On the theory that misery likes company, Mr. Howard might derive solace from the thought that his munificent "Shenandoah" also would be declined, for the reason that it does not follow the winter fashion-plates of 1907.

This is not the crinoline period of the drama, but the straight-front era. Sheridan wrote with a quill, and Mr. Howard with a steel pen; dramatists of the current vintage use the typewriter.

George Bernard Shaw is absolutely truthful and not necessarily bumptious

when he says that he is a better dramatist than Shakespeare. He is. So is Augustus Thomas, so is Pinnero, so are dozens of modern writers. It is the literature of Shakespeare's plays that survives; their drama is stale and decadent.

Imagine "Hamlet" being offered to-day on Broadway for the first time. How the critics would jump on it! They would call it dull, gloomy, old-fashioned, tiresome. Of *Hamlet* they undoubtedly would say that he talked too much. Browning's "Pippa Passes," a most excellent piece of writing, no doubt, has lately been presented at a series of special matinées in this city. It has more lately been taken from the boards. And why? The critics said that it bored them. And yet these same critics pronounce James Forbes' "The Chorus Lady" a success, and Mr. Forbes' most rabid admirers do not rank him with Robert Browning. To slightly amend Mr. Howard's doleful observation, Sheridan might succeed in presenting "School for Scandal" at that mausoleum of unrequited genius, a special matinée.

Within the month there came to Daly's Theater an English musical play,

entitled "The Belle of Mayfair." It achieved a success; but note the modification. While lauding Leslie Stuart's music to the uppermost zenith of composers' heaven, the critics and public grumbled that the libretto was stupid, that the story was weak and colorless. That story was nothing less classic than the story of "Romeo and Juliet," the recital of the Montague-Capulet feud. The authors had borrowed it boldly and credited it honestly. Twentieth-century Stuart triumphed; Elizabethan Shakespeare foozled.

Timely drama is the cry of the hour, and the cry has been answered in the new plays of the past month. The themes of the three most notable—"The New York Idea," "The Daughters of Men," and "The Man of the Hour"—were respectively complex divorce, the walking-delegate, and City Hall politics. There are no barnacles on those subjects. They are as up to date as the trial-marriage or the odorless motor-car. Previously we had had dramatized football, dramatized "frenzied finance," and dramatized osteopathy. May we not expect dramatic versions of the aeroplane and other modern improvements?

"The New York Idea," according to Mrs. Fiske's exposition at the Lyric Theater, seems to be: Love thy neighbor's wife as thyself. For form's sake, a divorce is recommended before this amatory proceeding begins, but the convenient Western style of decree, the just-add-hot-water-and-serve brand, will suffice, and the condition imposes no hardship.

"The American girl," remarks one of the characters, "has been brought up to believe that life is a joke, marriage a picnic, and her husband a shawl-strap."

It is on such a theory that the play progresses through a series of daring and brilliant entanglements, which ultimately lead to a new set of marriages and a fresh start all round. It's like a game of "Button, button, who's got the button"—the button all the time being the other fellow's wife.

The characters meet and compare

decrees, as automobile enthusiasts discuss their cars.

"What's yours?" asks *Phillimore*.

"Sioux Falls, 1905," replies *Karslake*. "What's yours?"

"Colorado Springs, 1906."

Here's the fun of the thing: *Phillimore* and *Karslake* are about to marry each other's discards. In fact, the play opens with *Phillimore*'s preparation for his marriage to *Mrs. Karslake*. The affair is not run off on schedule, because *Mrs. Karslake* spends a portion of her nuptial day with her first marital edition, and the remainder of it with an English baronet, who hangs about in readiness to take over any superfluous wife not already in rehearsal. *Mrs. Karslake* is finally rounded up, but bolts at the altar when she learns that her former husband is likely to wed her prospective husband's former wife. Oh, it is a deliciously intricate affair. The *Karslakes* eventually discover that their made-in-Dakota decree has a flaw which will not sustain the burden of a bigamy charge, and for want of other available material they remarry each other. The English baronet plucks *Mrs. Phillimore* out of this matrimonial grab-bag, and *Phillimore* discontinues his preparations for his wedding, and calls it off.

The scheme of the play is totally unlike that of any other comedy. It is the equal of "Man and Superman" in throwing new light on the marital relations, and it fairly scintillates in its dialogue. Step by step, Langdon Mitchell, its author, out-Shaws Shaw.

Mrs. Fiske, in the rôle of *Mrs. Karslake*, violates the speed ordinance whenever she speaks, but nevertheless gives a finished and lustrous performance. Marion Lea as the other divorcée distinguishes herself in the scene representing her boudoir, where she awaits in their turn a string of candidates bidding for her hand and the ultimate privilege of paying her alimony. George Arliss is the baronet, and John Mason the other derailed husband. Excellent throughout, each rises to new heights in the scene of the interrupted wedding, at which one set of the di-

vored appears as best man and bridesmaid respectively to the other set. Never was there a more ingenious play, and seldom one so well acted.

Of "The Daughters of Men," at the Astor Theater, one may not write in so glowing terms. Pity 'tis, 'tis true, but the effect of this play upon its audiences demonstrates conclusively that the primary mission of the theater is not to educate and instruct; or, at least, if this be not true, the stage has missed its calling.

Charles Klein, the author, ever alert to timely topics, has taken the tremendous subject of Capital and Labor for the corner-stone of his play. He has adhered rigidly to his text, with the result that Capital and Labor have been battling three rounds nightly to comparatively slim attendance; while "The Lion and the Mouse" and "The Music Master," two of his plays without a message, are bringing unceasing joy to the populace and corpulent royalties to the author. The fault with "The Daughters of Men" is that it is an infinitesimally tiny island of drama surrounded by a tempestuous sea of debate. As well look for a heart-throb in the city directory or romance in an agricultural report. The drama of the thing is a mere incident, a necessary evil, the slender, hidden thread upon which the beads of argument are strung.

It was all very thoughtful and very worthy and very earnest, but it was not effective play-writing. Seated snug and comfy in an armchair drawn up to the fireplace, with pipe and decanter within reach, we condescend to read scathing editorials in the evening papers, and agree that the troubles of the laboring man demand attention. If the tobacco and whisky be especially soothing we may even feel a just indignation, and resolve that at the next election we shall cast our vote against the monopoly of capital and in favor of the monopoly of labor.

But we don't want those editorials hurled at us in the theater. There we have sacrificed our slippers and our smoking-jacket for tight shoes and a

high collar. We have paid two dollars for this privilege, and we demand in return one hundred cents' worth of entertainment on each dollar. Quite likely this is all wrong. Maybe we should rejoice that for our two dollars and our tight shoes and our high collar we are receiving the researches of a sincere student on a dry but weighty economic problem. We don't, however. We would prefer to have the fellow marry the girl in more enlivening surroundings. We are ready to concede the force of the protagonist's argument in the first act, if in the second he will get down to business and give us a little courtship of the kind that father used to make.

Charles Klein may be ahead of his time. It is to be noticed that when the returns do not equal the expectations, dramatists have a way of pleading an anticipatory arrival. At any rate, the contemporary public relishes a full dose of tender passion in its drama, while sermons on economic problems may be administered in pellet form. In "The Daughters of Men," the fair-haired heroine is sandwiched between a federated brotherhood and an interstate combination; *Stedman*, the hero, suspends his declaration of love to denounce a walking-delegate, and *Thedford*, one of the money power's representatives, keeps one eye on his particular love-affair and the other on the ticker.

The two factions are balanced to a nicety. For every six of Capital there is a half-dozen of Labor. Only when the disputants pause for breath does the author step in and lend a touch of drama. A really noteworthy cast does the talking. Among those exhorting to the best advantage are Orrin Johnson, Herbert Kelcey, Dorothy Donnelly, Ralph Delmore, Effie Shannon, and E. W. Morrison.

An equally dangerous theme was handled with far greater success by George Broadhurst in "The Man of the Hour," at the Savoy. Politics was his text, and he excelled Mr. Klein by making his characters real human beings instead of upholstered phonographs.

Labor plays and political plays have ever been the bugbears of the stage.

Tradition—and all theaterdom is tradition—has it that the drama founded upon politics or socialistic questions cannot endure. So far as the political *bête noir* is concerned, tradition will hereafter remain silent.

There is a steadfast suspicion that the author had in mind for his central characters Mayor McClellan and the Honorable Charles F. Murphy and Timothy D. Sullivan. No one can doubt that he derived his inspiration from conditions existing at the City Hall since Mr. Murphy fell out and Mr. Sullivan fell in with the present administration. The Broadhurst counterparts of the three earnest citizens just mentioned are a *Boy Mayor*; *Harrigan*, the "boss," and *Phelan*, a minor "boss" with a grievance against his superior.

It is essentially a man's play, and that partiality toward the male sex may work its ruin, since never was there a really successful play that did not attract women. When the City Hall trio are on the stage the play fairly sizzles. *Harrigan* desires the passage of a certain franchise grab, and *Boy Mayor* is opposed to it. *Phelan* is against the bill because *Harrigan* is with it. Before *Boy Mayor* can attach his veto, he is beset by temptations that might have rendered St. Anthony a moral fiasco instead of the paragon he is labeled.

In due course, the spotless Mayor of Stage Town vetoes the grab that the uncle of the girl he loves—again the capitalist—fosters, and presumably signs his political death-warrant in so doing. Anyway, the girl, who is long on sentiment and short of politics, clings to her *Boy Mayor*, and, as she sinks into his arms with the fall of the curtain, probably fancies herself a future mistress of the White House.

The strength of the play is the delicious characterization displayed in *Harrigan* and *Phelan*. The rôle of the "boss" is played by Frank MacVicars, a stranger on Broadway. Mr. MacVicars is six feet tall, and possesses the exaggerated girth that goes with states-

manship. The vigor, the blunt contempt for honesty, and the arrogant confidence in his own position constitute a type made familiar by the newspaper cartoon and Tammany mass-meetings. *Phelan*, his antagonist in the "machine," is the more genial sort, addicted to a rough wit and a coarse humor, which help the play materially. George Fawcett in this part gives one of the best portrayals before the public to-day. Frederick Perry was the *Mayor* with the overtrained virtue; and he, too, plays creditably. The other characters are not unimportant, but "The Man of the Hour" depends really upon the three men described.

This play, like the two preceding ones mentioned, at worst, represent a marked advance in the choice of subject. The old plots and the old characters are being swept aside by the march of the younger playwrights. They have been kicked into the attic of oblivion.

Anything David Belasco does is interesting. Trust him to get full value out of an opportunity. Give him the center of the stage—and he is always there even when you do not see him—turn the lime-lights on at their full candle-power, and expect him to do the rest. He always has a home-made halo tucked away in his pocket for use at first-nights, and he wears it most becomingly.

"The Rose of the Rancho," his latest contribution to stage spectacle, shows how the mole labored and gave forth a mountain. From any given situation or given plot, no matter how ridiculously meager, Mr. Belasco can extract more of what passes for drama than any other producer in the world. Richard Walton Tully furnished the acorn from which this imposing oak of scenery grew. The acorn was a fragile little story about Juanita, "La Rose del Rancho," and the efforts of her family and neighbors to save their lands in southern California from the land-grabbers of the early '50's.

Upon this Mr. Belasco built a bewildering spectacle of dreamy, sensuous, transplanted Spain. He erected a pic-

turesque old monastery, and gave it masterful touches of poetic garniture; he created a riot of colors, confetti, mandolins, and fandangoes within the patio of a house near Monterey where *Juanita's* betrothal festivities were in progress, and for a grand climax he climbed to the roof of the same house, and at a new altitude reproduced the wonderfully tense situation—first conceived by Dion Boucicault—that brought triumph to his earlier play, "The Girl I Left Behind Me." When it was all over, analysis of the play was lost amid a mystifying array of stage pictures.

Vivisection is necessary to arrive at a just valuation of any of Mr. Belasco's works. The beauty of "The Rose of the Rancho" is only skin-deep, but few of the public are inclined to flay it. This latest progeny of Mr. Belasco's necromancy has several absolutely barren stretches of dialogue. Yet one cannot fall to sleep. With the very first yawn there comes some new device of stagecraft, some new specimen of trickery, and presto! one's eyes are staring wide open at a dazzling sunset or a superb moonlight.

The real triumph of the production is the exploitation of a comparatively unknown young actress, who in a single night was promoted from obscurity to transcendent glory. Before the first performance was ended, Miss Frances Starr, as *Juanita*, had used Mr. Belasco's sorcery as a convenient stepping-stone to a brilliant future. Her vivacity saved the day—or the night—when all but hope was gone. Her accent, it is true, smacks more of the Rue Montmartre than it does of Castille, yet she is sprightly, alert, dainty, and refreshing in a character that is far too garrulous. Mr. Belasco displayed much greater skill in selecting Miss Starr as his Rose than he did in selecting the play itself.

Wonders will never cease at the Hippodrome, that Hip, Hip, Hurrah! of the world's playhouses. A year ago, when "A Society Circus" gave us the gorgeous Crystal Fountains, we stared until our eyes ached, and applauded un-

til our hands blistered. Then we became sober, and said:

"Too bad. This production can never be surpassed. The limit has been reached. We have seen it all now, and shall never want to come again."

We forgot that we had made the same remark five years before, when the beautiful "Ballet of the Seasons" in "The Sleeping Beauty and the Beast" was sprung on our unsuspecting gaze. Well, if the Crystal Fountains were the limit, then Shubert and Anderson, the new managers of the Hippodrome, have overstepped the limit. The ballet representing the Court of King Neptune under the sea is an achievement never equaled in the famous ballets of London's renowned Empire. Such a wonderful blending of colors, such a deluge of whirling, twisting, pirouetting girls—each representing a seahorse, a Titan lobster, a giant turtle, or some other submarine wonder—such a seething, tossing, writhing mass, all attuned to a dominant rhythm, bring us face to face with the fairy-land of childhood's fantasies.

This was marvelous, this was prodigious. To produce the effect of water the ballet was danced behind a diaphanous screen curtain. You thought the acme of stage grandeur had been attained, when, without warning, down came the screen, a thousand lights were turned on, and the beauties of the picture were multiplied a dozen times. Extravagant language, this? Well, go and see for yourself.

The ballet is not the sum total of the Hippodrome show. An altogether astonishing feat is performed in the earlier scenes of "Neptune's Daughter," when from the sea of real water nymphs pop up only to pop back again without showing any signs of distress and few signs of moisture. In pursuit of the mermaids a score of the actors dive headlong into the tank, and disappear completely. Whither they go or what becomes of them the audience can merely guess. If only a number of Broadway actors would bathe in this ravenous tank, the stage would be the gainer.



FOR BOOK LOVERS

Archibald Lowery Sessions

A growing disposition to take the middle West as the setting for fiction. Alice Ames Winter's "Jewel Weed" entertaining and well-told. Jack London's "Moon Face" tinged with rather fantastic brutality. "Rich Men's Children" by Geraldine Bonner a clever tangle. Mrs. John Van Vorst's "Letters to Women in Love" full of tact, delicacy and sympathy. "Jane Cable" has the same interest which makes all George Barr McCutcheon's books so popular. "The Prince Goes Fishing," by Elizabeth Duer, a charming story stamped with individuality. E. Temple Thurston's "Traffic" sordid and disagreeable but, nevertheless, of remarkable strength. "Paul," by E. F. Benson, fresh evidence of the author's versatility.



T may not be a matter of very great importance or significance, but it is at least interesting to observe what seems to be a growing disposition to take as the setting for a novel one phase or another of the social life of Middle Western towns and cities. It is interesting not so much because of the freshness or originality of such material as because it seems to indicate that, for some reason or other, the attention of writers of fiction has been directed toward these communities as a field for good stories.

There are, after all, no very radical differences in the social life of American towns and cities, no matter in what section of the country they are located. Probably there is less variation from the average of the whole country to be observed in such places in the Middle West than anywhere else. The early settlers of that region came mostly from the Atlantic seaboard from New England to Virginia, and there were no elements in their customs and traditions that were not easily amalgamated. So that in the course of time

their settlements developed into what may be regarded as fairly typical.

There are no unusual complexities to be found in these places. The same human activities that prevail in American towns and cities in other sections of the country have substantially the same function there. Society life, politics, and commerce supply very much the same sort of material for the description of dramatic action. Even the refinements of civilization, which are supposed to accompany only age and tradition, have their influence. Literature and art contribute their part in stimulating interest.

These facts, however, do not explain why so much attention is bestowed by certain American writers of fiction on the class of towns and cities that have been referred to. If there is nothing strikingly peculiar about them, there is, of course, no reason for resorting to them merely for the sake of something original either in local color or human interest.

The real reason is probably to be found in the development of a consciousness of self; these communities seem to have acquired a capacity of observation of themselves, an attitude of detachment which enables them to play

the rôle of spectators of their own performance. And they have, in the process, produced their own critics and historians, so to speak; in other words, the authors who write of these place have been born and brought up in them, as a rule.

Under these circumstances, it is likely that the novels so far published with this setting and background are merely the beginnings, not necessarily of a new school of fiction, but of fiction in what is, in a sense, a new field.



The latest book with a background of this sort is Alice Ames Winter's "Jewel Weed," published by the Bobbs-Merrill Company.

It is the story of the life of two young men, Ellery Norris and Richard Percival, in St. Étienne, to which the latter has come home from an Eastern college bringing Norris, who has been his chum, and is now seeking an opening as a journalist.

The book has as its foundation the contrasts of character in the two friends, out of which grow, naturally and inevitably, the episodes and entanglements which combine to make the plot. Madeline Elton is, by virtue of her relations with them both, so involved in their interests as to become, by degrees, the central figure of the story.

Dick Percival's rather volatile nature leads him into mistakes which bring him the most serious consequences, though he is by no means the sort of man whose conduct can be made the subject of reprobation. The villain of the tale is personated by the Hindu, Ram Juna, at first a mysterious individual, who afterward turns out to be rather a common kind of grafted. The story is entertaining and well told.



Another volume of short stories, by Jack London, is published by the Macmillan Company, under the title of "Moon Face." Of the eight tales in-

cluded in the book, all but two, "Planchette" and "All Gold Cañon," are examples of his earlier work; these two having appeared serially within the past year.

The whole collection is tinged, more or less, with the rather fantastic brutality with which the author has adopted—consciously, it seems—to give individuality to his books. "Moon Face" (from which the volume takes its title), "The Leopard Man's Story," and "All Gold Cañon" are the three most characteristic. The two first mentioned have substantially the same theme, worked out in substantially similar style. Murder, committed through the agency of an animal to satisfy a purposeless grudge, so ingeniously contrived as to enable the murderer to escape detection, is the nucleus of both stories, though it is, of course, differently worked out.

"All Gold Cañon" is probably the best of the eight, for it shows some originality of conception, considerable skill in construction, a good degree of literary finish, besides having an interest which the others do not carry.

The others, with the exception of "Local Color," are not especially notable, and will not, we think, add very much to the author's reputation.

Of "Planchette," it is to be said that one cannot read it without thinking regretfully of Kipling's "Brushwood Boy."



The Bobbs-Merrill Company has published another of Geraldine Bonner's Western stories, which she calls "Rich Men's Children."

What Easterners are prone to consider (mistakenly, no doubt) the crudities of society life on the Pacific Slope have been used by Miss Bonner as the setting and color for this story just as she used them before in "The Pioneer." The characters are chiefly those who have achieved wealth and position through lucky mining operations from a very humble beginning. Mrs. Dominick Ryan, whose personality dominates the story throughout,

helped her husband in his early struggles by doing the washing for the denizens of a mining-camp. But the possession of millions, and an assured social position in San Francisco, have so changed her views of life that she refuses to tolerate what she considers an unworthy marriage by her son, and consistently declines to recognize his wife. Out of her attitude in this matter grow the complications which make up the plot.

The young man finds other reasons than those given by his mother for reaching the conclusion that his marriage is a mistake. His wife turns out to be a woman quite different from the one his fancy painted her—a consummation which, it may be said without making undue concessions to the cynically inclined, is found often enough in real life both by husbands and wives to make the same situation in "Rich Men's Children" plausible.

It would be unfair to the reader to tell how the tangle is unraveled. The story is too interesting and too well told to spoil it by anticipating the climax.



Whether Mrs. John Van Vorst's new book is to be classified as fiction or as a collection of essays is, perhaps, a little uncertain. There is something to be said for both views, and consequently it is doubtless safe to conclude that an appreciable influence is manifested by each.

"Letters to Women in Love" is not, as the author says, in her foreword, a collection of love-letters, "but they treat of love." Letters to people in love, "are they not addressed more or less to the world at large"? Perhaps, but it is fortunate for the reader of Mrs. Van Vorst's book that the correspondence is not so impersonal as the query suggests.

The book deals with some of the discordant influences of love. For, though "love is the great source of joy, it is also a chief cause of suffering." Rather a depressing thought it may be said, by the way, but, while it may

please cynics, it will not discourage lovers. Notable among these influences, the author finds, upon an analysis of her correspondence, indifference, ambition, egoism, jealousy. And Jane Cairesbrooke, Lily Burnside, Beatrice Thayer, and Elizabeth Aiken are the women suffering from the effects of these emotions respectively.

Mrs. Van Vorst's rôle as the father—or mother—confessor of the four women is played with tact, delicacy, sympathy, and success, an achievement which both she and her publishers—D. Appleton & Co.—are entitled to regard with complacency, and her four correspondents with gratitude.



In "Jane Cable," George Barr McCutcheon has written in a rather more serious vein than he has attempted in most of his previous work. There is in this none of the irony that seemed to pervade the Graustark stories, nor the frank frivolity of "The Day of the Dog," "The Purple Parasol," and "Nedra." It is an attempt which is serious in the sense that the author has undertaken to write a more or less conventional tale, and in this he has measurably succeeded.

The villain of the book—who is James Bansemer, the hero's father—and the uncertainties about the birth of Jane Cable, constitute the foundations of the plot, and the tribulations which they entail upon Jane and her lover, Graydon Bansemer, make the story possible. The harmless deception practised upon her husband by Mrs. Cable opens the way for further complications, the explanations to which come altogether in the last chapter.

The scenes shift from Chicago, where the book opens, to the Philippines, with Graydon in the American Army and Jane a nurse, and then to New York.

While it is by no means a great book, it has the same interest which makes all of Mr. McCutcheon's books so popular, and as to the causes of which none of his critics or readers have so far been able to give adequate reasons.

Perhaps some time Mr. McCutcheon will think it worth his while to write a book which will command commendation on other grounds than those of popularity merely.



Of Elizabeth Duer's new book, "The Prince Goes Fishing," D. Appleton & Co., it may be said with a degree of truth that it belongs to that school of romantic fiction of which "The Prisoner of Zenda" is the prototype, but with that statement comparisons must end. It is not Mrs. Duer's habit to follow anybody; she does her own work in her own way, and never fails to stamp it with an individuality that incurs no obligations.

The story deals with the match that has been arranged between Maximilian, crown prince of Palatine, and the Princess Hélène, of Grippenburg, for the purpose of settling certain financial transactions had between their respective fathers. The young people are practically unknown to each other, and Maximilian makes no secret of his repugnance to the matrimonial deal. While not openly rebellious, he is at least sufficiently cool about the matter to produce complications that result in a very interesting story.

The character-drawing is particularly good, the more so because, in addition to the atmosphere of charm which all the characters have, Mrs. Duer has succeeded in imparting to them that indefinable quality of vitality which makes them all act and talk like real men and women.



A superficial review of E. Temple Thurston's book, "Traffic," G. W. Dillingham Company, will doubtless pronounce it a disagreeable, sordid, purposeless tale. But such an estimate is very far from doing it full justice. It is a sordid story, and hence in many of its details it is unquestionably disagreeable, particularly in some of the descriptions of the nearly bestial condi-

tions possible in Irish peasant life. It is, however, redeemed from reproach by the pathetically human interest of Nanno Troy.

The story is the story of her life, begun and lived, up to the climax of the tale, under conditions, intolerable to one of her breeding, but inevitable to a devout Roman Catholic as she was. Held, by the law of her church, in revolting bondage to a husband as nearly animal as a human being can be, her state was absolutely hopeless, and was made worse by the visions which the love of Jerningham opened for her. The reserve, developed in a sensitive nature by her early surroundings, magnified the difficulties of her situation, and, by a strange paradox, brought her to the final degradation in London, from which only her own innate purity and its recognition by Jerningham's devotion finally rescued her.

It is a book of remarkable strength and literary merit, but it is very doubtful if it will achieve popularity.



E. F. Benson's last book, published by Lippincott under the title of "Paul," is fresh evidence of the author's versatility. The story is not altogether a pleasant one; indeed, to a fastidious taste, it may even be considered a little gruesome. But there can be no doubt of its strength, and it contains not a few situations of intense dramatic feeling.

The character of Theodore Beckwith will doubtless suggest to many readers, as the author obviously intended it should, something of the quality of the fabled vampire, for the part that he plays in the story, the influence that he exerts over the lives of his wife, Norah, and his friend, Paul Norris, are like nothing so much as the repulsive creature of Slavic superstition.

The delight that he takes in throwing the two young people together, the incredible pleasure he derives in observing the agony of temptation that their love produces, have furnished the author with opportunities for scenes of

extraordinary power, but in spite of the interest they excite, most readers will draw a sigh of relief when Beckwith's death puts an end to it all.

From that point to the end the interest is not maintained in the same proportion, though, if it were not for the earlier climax, this criticism would be largely without weight. As it is, the mental and moral conflicts through which Paul passes will, we are inclined to think, be apt to weary the reader before he has reached the end.

The book is written with Mr. Benson's customary conscientious regard for his art, and in Paul and Norah, and all of the subordinate characters, he has done work that he has not equaled in any of his previous books.



There is something in a good detective or mystery story that never fails to make an appeal to all classes of readers. Such tales are neither for men nor women exclusively; they never fail to interest both sexes.

A book of this kind is "The Chase of the Golden Plate," by Jacques Futrelle, published by Dodd, Mead & Co. There is nothing strikingly original about it; probably it is next to impossible to write a detective story that is strictly original, because there must always be a crime committed and a search for the criminal; but there is considerable ingenuity displayed here in outlining the manner of the theft and in the cumulation of difficulties thrown in the way of the processes of detection.

Dick Herbert and Dolly Meredith, as the lovers in the tale, are, of course, the persons most deeply involved in the intricacies of the plot and those also whose interests are most vitally concerned in the mysterious double theft of the golden plate. The chain of circumstances which point to Herbert on both occasions as the thief are a little

unusual, if not improbable, but that fact does not affect the interest of the story.

It will be said, very likely, that Mr. Futrelle is indebted, more or less, to Conan Doyle in the introduction of the "Thinking Machine," as the agency through which the mystery is unraveled. But it ought to be remembered that Sherlock Holmes had his protagonists in Monsieur Lecoq, Dupin, and Detective Gryce; he was by no means the first to apply deductive reasoning to the solution of mysteries. As a matter of fact, the detective who is made to depend upon hypothesis for the final establishment of his facts, is always the most interesting, whether in fiction or in criminal courts.

"The Chase of the Golden Plate" will be found to be an extremely good story of its type, and entirely free from any objectionable features.



Important New Books.

"Rosemary in Search of a Father," C. N. & A. M. Williamson, McClure, Phillips & Co.

"The Chase of the Golden Plate," Jacques Futrelle, D. Appleton & Co.

"Half a Rogue," Harold MacGrath, Bobbs-Merrill Co.

"The Dream and the Business," John Oliver Hobbes, D. Appleton & Co.

"The Amulet," Charles Egbert Craddock, Macmillan Co.

"Sophy of Kravonia," Anthony Hope, Harper & Bros.

"Real Soldiers of Fortune," Richard Harding Davis, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Gabrielle, Transgressor," Harris Dickson, J. B. Lippincott Co.

"The One Way Out," Bettina von Hutton, Dodd, Mead & Co.

"The Very Small Person," Annie Hamilton Donnell, Harper & Bros.

"Billy Boy," John Luther Long, Dodd, Mead & Co.

"Katrina," Roy Rolfe Gilson, Baker & Taylor Co.

"Letters to Women in Love," Mrs. John Van Vorst, D. Appleton & Co.

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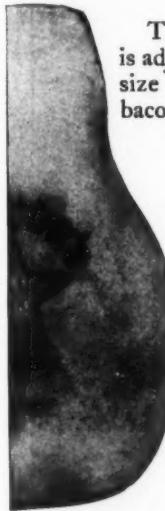
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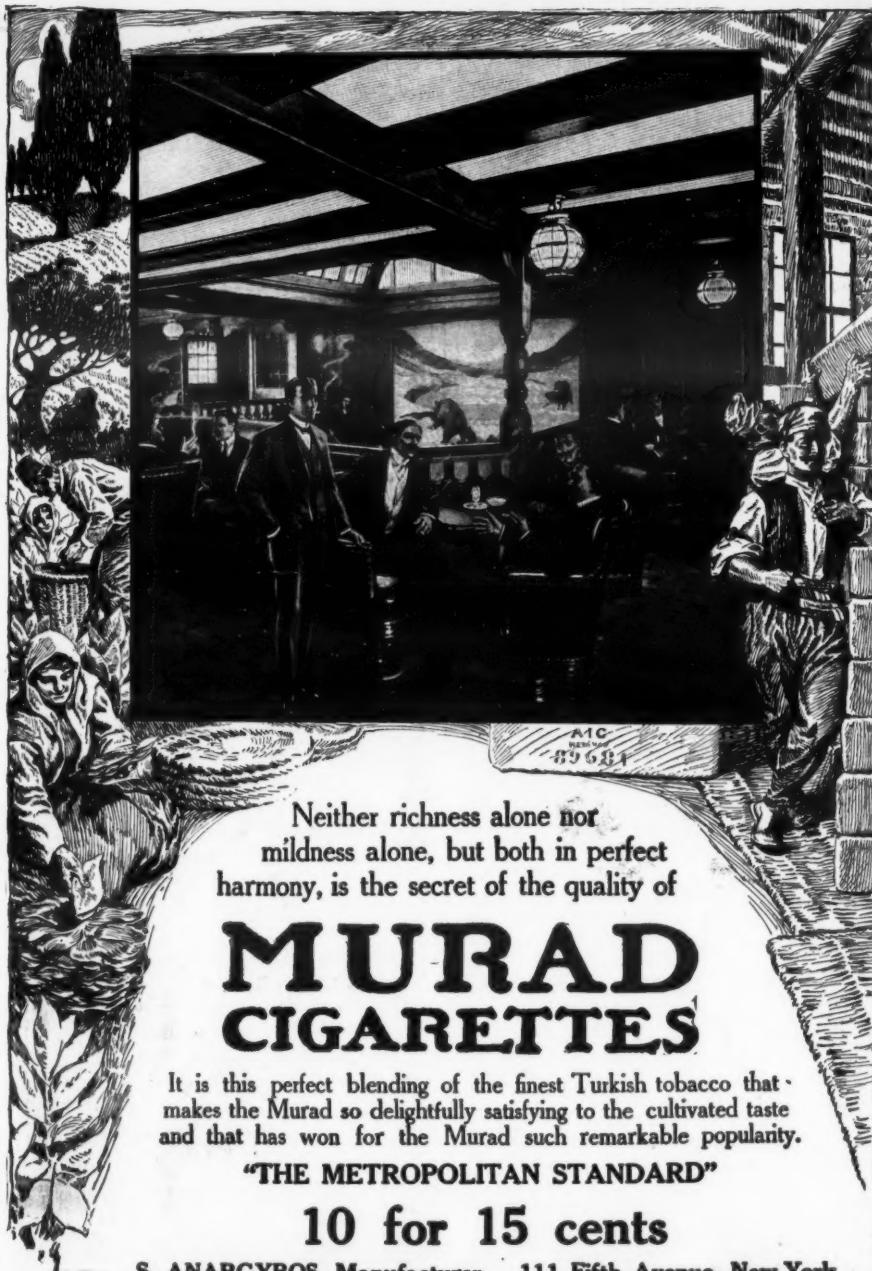


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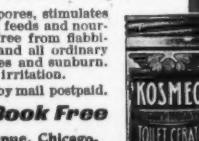
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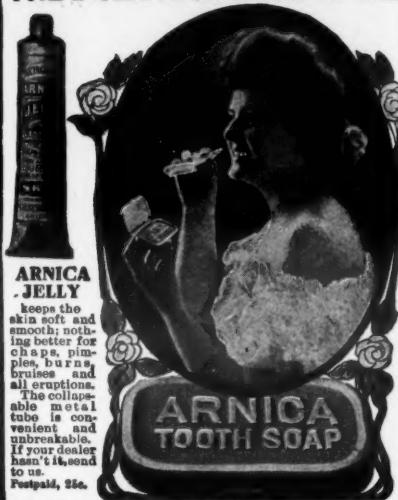
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4968	The Bowery Grenadiers	The Old Brown Hat	Gorman-Lowan 10	
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4949	Songs by Billy Murray	Coon Song	Billy Murray 10	
4974	Records by Burt Shepard	Fol de Idley Id	Burton 10	
4920	Baritone Solo by Mr. Murray	The Old Brown Hat	J. W. Myers 10	
4955	Duet by Miss Jones & Mr. Murray	Matrimony	J. W. Myers 10	
4951	When You Think It's Time to Marry	When the Flowers Bloom in Springtime	Edwards 10	
4975	Duet by Miss Trix and Mr. Quinn	Molly Dear,	Von Tilzer 10	
4950	Folk by Miss Jones, Mr. Murray and Mr. Kernell	When Her Beauty Begins to Fade	Morse 10	
4970	Trinity Choir	Jesus, Meek and Gentle	Ambrose 10	
4971	Male Quartets by the Haydn Quartet	When the Flowers Bloom in Springtime	Haydn 10	
4957	When the Flowers Bloom in Springtime	Molly Dear,	Von Tilzer 10	
4966	When Her Beauty Begins to Fade	When Her Beauty Begins to Fade	Morse 10	
4953	Yankee Stories by Cal Stewart	Uncle Josh and the Labor Union	Gounod 10	In
4954	Uncle Josh's Second Visit to the Metropolis	Uncle Josh's Second Visit to the Metropolis	Gounod 10	10
4955	Descriptive Specialties by Miss Jones and Mr. Spencer	Down on the Farm	31597	10
4973	Rosie and Rudolph on the Skating Rink			10
31598	Yankee Tales by Cal Stewart			10
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4969	Bout by Collins and Harlan			10
4960	Arash-Wanna			10
4961	Male Quartet by the Haydn Quartet			10
2518	Quartet from the Cradle of the Deep			10
4962	Recitation by Edgar L. Davenport			10
4942	The Seven Ages of Man			10
4963	Descriptive Specialty by Miss Jones and Mr. Spencer			10
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4954	Yankee Tales by Cal Stewart			10
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4956	German Solo by George P. Watson			10
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8807	The Erlking (with piano)			
8808	Schubert			
8809	Die Walküre—Wunder			
8810	LaForge 12			
8804	(a) Little Red Riding Hood (with piano)			
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George Barr McCutcheon

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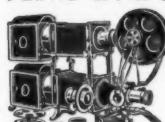
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These scientific facts are not new. But a means of overcoming the difficulties has just recently been presented to the world. Its name is PEPTOL, the new flesh builder. PEPTOL is the result of years of experimenting—proving—testing; the discovery of the world's most noted food experts. This wonderful new food remedy embodies the very elements that build flesh. It is simply concentrated vegetable fat and starch, pre-digested and ready to be taken quickly into the system. It relieves the digestive organs of the work of assimilation. It makes you eat—makes you long for meal time.

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will increase your weight in 30 days. It will not cost you a cent if it fails. With the first supply we give you a "refund bond"—an absolute guarantee of increased weight, or money returned without question or quibble. Your word alone suffices. We do this because we know what PEPTOL will do by what it has done. We know it will make a substantial and permanent increase in weight in 98 per cent of cases. Let it prove its worth in your case. Sign the coupon below and send to-day—"Why People are lean" our interesting book will be sent free.

PEPTOL will soon be on sale at all drug stores but the first supply must be ordered direct from

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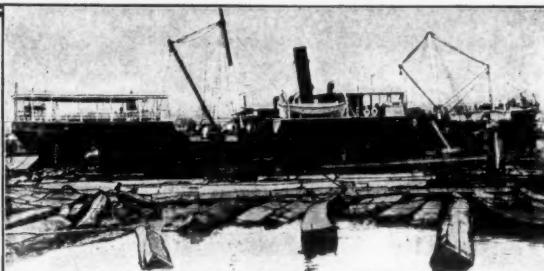
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 \$1.00 for which send me
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 after 30 days use I do not gain
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Much larger dividends estimated on full development of property. These dividends paid from profits of Company's stores and sale of valuable lumber. Thirteen steamship loads of lumber already shipped to United States.

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October 15, 1906, the General Manager of the Company reports from our plantation highly satisfactory progress of development since visit of stockholders' inspector last spring. Many permanent buildings, three new camps, 27 miles of telephone line, new locomotive, sawmill enlarged.

2300 acres of rubber to harvest; 7000 orange trees, 200,000 hamelia plants, 3,000,000 henequen plants, all growing finely. (At \$50 per acre—low estimate—each thousand acres of henequen will yield 1½ dividend, 12,000 acres being planted.) 500 acres of rubber, besides many wild rubber trees ready to tap. Lumber, mahogany, chicle soon to be made available as a large source of dividends. Mahogany, cedar, and other valuable lumber; two cargoes shipped since inspector's visit; another ready. (This reached Mobile Nov. 24.) Company now has over one hundred thousand dollars' worth of lumber in Mobile and sawmill enlarged.

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Investments in stock at par and 12% in special dividends. Liberal terms, \$5 per month per share. A safe, profitable life income. Over 5,000 stockholders. Write for complete report of General Manager, also report of stockholders' representative who investigated the development of plantation last Spring. FREE.

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New Locomotive, on I. L. & D. Co's Property, attached to train of mahogany and cedar logs, on way to Chenkan, the seaport on Company's land. (Picture taken in two sections).



AN INCOME OF \$1000 A YEAR SECURED BY SMALL MONTHLY PAYMENTS.

The Less Money you have, the Greater is the Need to place it where it will Work Hard and Fast for You.

If you can save five to twenty-five dollars per month for a few months, here is the fairest and best safeguarded and most practical plan ever offered you to make these savings produce an assured income. And remember your money goes into real estate, the foundation of all values, the recognized measure of all conservative securities.

We are developing a thousand acres of fertile land to a product which possesses an enormous capacity for profit-making, and we are offering to you an interest in this investment which will not only increase enormously in value, but will bring you a splendid annual income.

JUST FACTS.

There is already a splendid orchard of 25,000 peach trees one year old on this property, and further planting is now rapidly being made. Bearing peach orchards are worth \$300 an acre. Why? Because an acre of Elberta Peaches will net its owner one hundred dollars a year.

Mr. J. Ogden Armour, of the great Armour Packing Co., in the *Saturday Evening Post* of January 20, 1906, says, "Peach lands with bearing peach orchards command \$200 to \$300 an acre." Let us send you also the written testimony of many conservative bankers, more than corroborating these figures.

There is nothing about the following figures that you cannot understand or verify. 130 peach-trees to the acre, one bushel of fruit to the tree, at \$1 per bushel, means \$130 per acre. Less than 20% of this will care for the acre and all expenses of harvest. You may, until the present series of two hundred shares is sold, secure these shares (each representing an undivided acre of developed orchard) for only \$100 of your money, paid in small instalments of only \$5 per month. This is worth investigating.

WE PROVE EVERY STATEMENT.

Write for our plan and make your own investigation. Do this—**do it now.** It costs you nothing. You will not find any back-number statesmen among our officers and directors. You will not find any name put there for ornamental purposes only. But you **will** find men who know their business, who are accustomed to earning their money by "delivering the goods,"—all men whom you can very easily find out about.

Don't take our word for these things. Look us up. Start now upon the road to success and at a pace that will make saving a greater pleasure than **spending.** Let us show you what \$5 per month will do for you.

Ten of these shares will at maturity yield you a sure and certain annual income of one thousand dollars.

ONLY A FEW SHARES.

There are only one thousand of our shares altogether, and they are selling above par right now. You pay less than **one-half** the cost of these shares out of your own money; the rest is earned by the property itself. And more, every dollar you pay is deposited with a responsible Trust Company, which acts as trustee, and this money is all used for development of the investment **and for nothing else.**

Not a dollar of the money you pay in is profit to us, and **no one** gets a profit until you do. It is only by making the investment profitable to you that we can make any profit. The men who make you this offer are practical, hard-headed business men, who own large interests in this same line, and have received, and are now receiving, large profits from them.

We give by permission the following bank references:

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SAFEGUARDS.

Every possible safeguard surrounds this investment. A responsible and well-known Trust Company holds title to the property as trustee. We deposit with them the money you pay to us, and we are compelled to file with them sworn statements as to the development of the property. (Look up this Trust Company.) You are fully protected from loss in case of death, and you are given a suspension of payments if desired. Examine into our safeguards.

This investment opens the door, not to wealth perhaps, but to what is far better, a competency for future years when you may not be able to earn it.

Our literature explains everything fully and concisely. It is free. We want to send it to you. Write for it now.

SECURITY ELBERTA COMPANY,
158 New Nelson Building **Kansas City, Mo.**

Let Me Prove That 10 Acres ^{of} this Irrigated Land will earn \$250.00 A Month For You



E. W. SHUTT, President
Rio Grande Land, Water & Power Co.

I Will Sell It To You For \$2.50 a Week

Irrigated, under cultivation, ready to earn at least \$250 a month.

YOU know, or can easily learn from United States Government Reports, that irrigated lands in the Great Southwest, in selected crops, will net \$300 to \$1,000 a year per acre over and above the entire cost of cultivating them.

Any man in the country will tell you that absolutely the surest, safest way in the world to gain a large and permanent income for a small outlay is to get hold of a few acres of irrigated land in the Great Southwest.

But a man has to buy it has required at least a few hundred dollars and it has been necessary for the investor to live on the land and develop it.

Now, my company makes it possible for you to get all the benefits of irrigated land in the world if you can save \$2.50 a week.

You can go and live on it—absolutely assured of an income far above the average.

Or you can remain in your present position and add that much to what you earn.

For my company will cultivate your property for a small share of the crops.

You don't have to know a thing in the world about farming.

Now, I can and will prove all this from the highest authorities in the land.

"Prove to me that ten acres of your land will net from \$3,000 to \$10,000 a year above all cost of cultivating it."

I have the proof, so read what my company will do for you. *

I will deliver to you at once a Secured Land Contract for ten acres of irrigated land in the Rio Grande Valley.

You must pay my company \$2.50 a week or as much more as you like.

I will then pay all expenses, including my interest on deferred payments. I agree, for my company, to pay you 6% per annum on the money you pay in.

I also give my company to fully irrigate your land and turn it over to you under full cultivation whenever you desire to mature your contract.

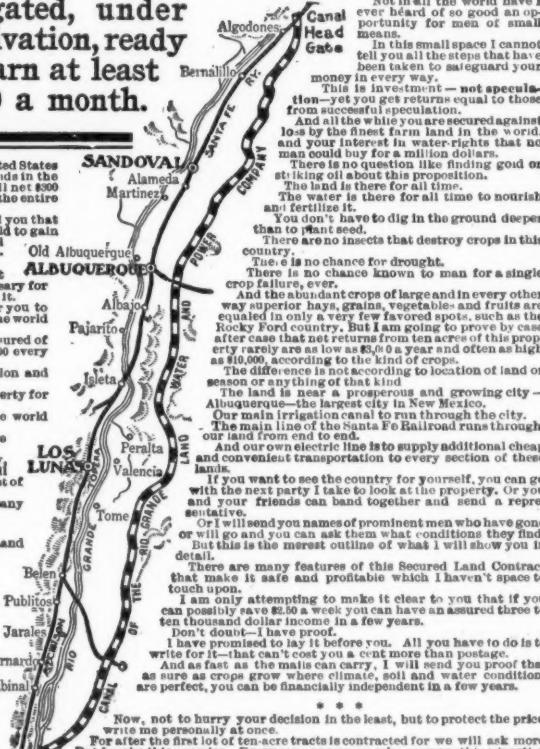
\$2.50 a week will mature your contract in three years.

But after you have paid \$2.50 a week for three years, or the same total amount in a shorter time, I agree and bind my company to loan you enough money to make all future payments and mature your contract.

Remember, the land will be fully irrigated and completely under cultivation, so your first year's expense will be \$2.50 a week to cover the cost of cultivating it to fully pay your loan.

You would then own your land outright and have an assured income of from \$3,000 to \$10,000 a year.

Can you hope in any other way as safe and sure as this to have so large an income in a few years?



Not in all the world have I ever heard of so good an opportunity for men of small means.

In this small space I cannot tell you all the steps that have been taken to safeguard your money in every way.

This is investment—not speculation—yet you get returns equal to those from successful speculation.

The land is secured against loss by the finest farm land in the world, and your interest in water rights that no man could buy for a million dollars.

There is oil, gas, coal, gold or striking oil about this proposition.

The land is there for all time to nourish and utilize.

You don't have to dig in the ground deeper than want need.

There are no insects that destroy crops in this country.

There is no chance for drought.

There is no chance known to man for a single crop failure, ever.

And the abundant crops of large and in every other way superior ways, green vegetables and fruits are equal in only a few favorite spots, such as the Rocky Ford country. But I am going to prove by case after case that net returns from ten acres of this property range as low as \$3,000 a year and often as high as \$10,000 to \$15,000 a year for crops.

The difference is not according to location of land or season or anything of that kind.

The land is near a prosperous and growing city—Albuquerque—the largest city in New Mexico.

Our main irrigation canals run through the city.

The main line of the Santa Fe Railroad runs through our land from end to end.

And our own electric line is to supply additional cheap and convenient transportation to every section of these lands.

If you want to see the country for yourself, you can go with the next party I take to look at the property. Or you and your friends can band together and send a representative.

Or I will send you names of prominent men who have gone or will go and you can ask them what conditions they find.

But this is the merest outline of what I will show you in detail.

There are many features of this Secured Land Contract that make it safe and profitable which I haven't space to touch upon.

I am only attempting to make it clear to you that if you can afford to save \$2.50 a week you can have an assured three to ten thousand dollar income in a few years.

Don't doubt—I have proof.

I have promised to lay it before you. All you have to do is to write me personally at once.

And as fast as the main can carry, I will send you proof that as sure as crops grow where climate, soil and water conditions are perfect, you can be financially independent in a few years.

* * *

Now, not to hurry your decision in the least, but to protect the price, write me personally at once.

For after the first lot of ten-acre tracts is contracted for we will ask more. But it is this that counts. Every man or woman who answers this advertisement at once can have at least ten acres on these terms unless, of course, all our land should be already contracted for from this one advertisement.

Now, write at once. I can say nothing more in this advertisement except that you could not tell me of a better investment for your money. For you won't believe it without the proof which I cannot put in an advertisement. Address me personally, and believe me sincerely,

E. W. SHUTT. President Rio Grande Land, Water and Power Co.
676 Houser Building, ST. LOUIS, MO.



I WANT TO SEND YOU MY MAGAZINE SIX MONTHS FREE

I want you to sit down now and, while you are thinking about it, write your name on a postal card and send it to me. In return I will send you our handsomely illustrated monthly magazine

"THE MONEY MAKER" SIX MONTHS FREE

THE MONEY MAKER is a beautiful magazine, printed in two colors, and every issue is filled with interesting, helpful articles that will tell you how to save money and how to make a safe investment of your savings. The magazine is a veritable mint of information regarding all kinds of real estate investments. It will tell you how and where to buy, how long to hold a property, what class of real estate grows in value most rapidly, etc. It wil' show you how you can invest small sums—\$5.00 and upward each month—in the safest of real estate securities that will return you splendid profits. It will tell you how you can buy a lot in New York City—wonderful, money-making New York—by paying a little down and a little each month, and how that lot should double and treble in value while you are paying for it.

Be sure to write for this magazine to-day. I will send it promptly at your request. It won't cost you a cent, and you will be under no obligation whatever. Address either office.

W. M. OSTRANDER (INO.), Real Estate Exclusively
Suite 107, 25 W. 42d St., New York. 107 North American Bldg., Philadelphia.

Are You Too Thin?

For only 15 minutes a day's practice in your own room upon special exercises that I will give you, you can be round, plump, wholesome, rested and attractive. Nature intended you to be—why should you not? The following are extracts from the weekly reports of my pupils:

"Just think, Miss Cocroft! I have gained 25 pounds."

"Before I began your work, I could not eat anything without the greatest distress, and now I think I can digest ticks. I am so happy."

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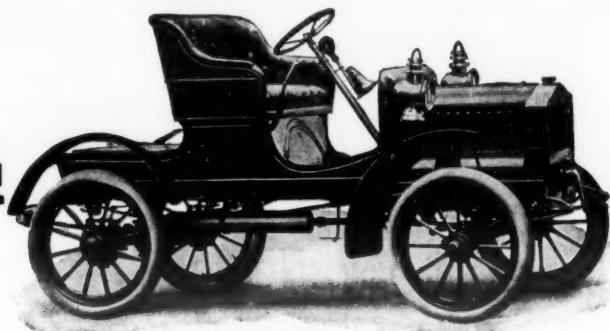
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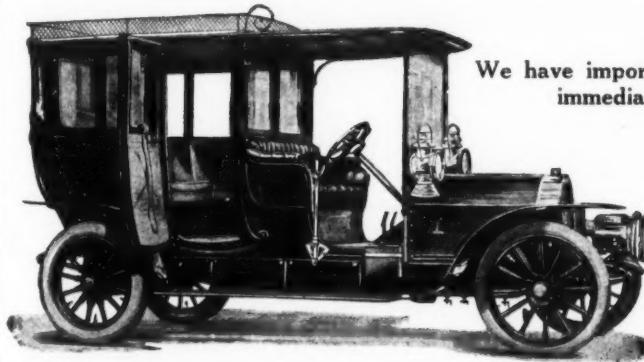
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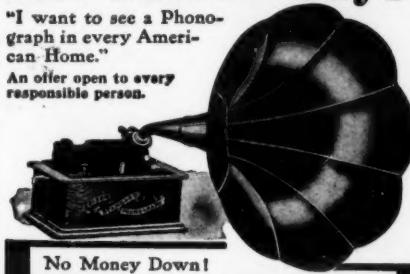
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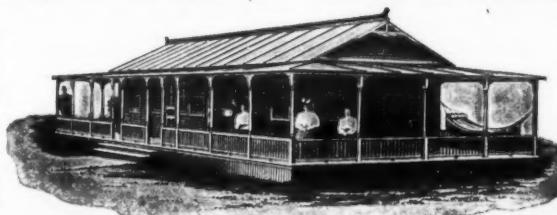
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The skin isn't merely a covering for the body; it's one of the *most important* organs of the body.

It contains 28 miles of glands (pores) which should daily discharge at least two pounds of waste or effete matter (as moisture) to keep the body healthy.

If the pores become clogged with flakes of dead skin (constantly scaling off)—or atoms of dirt and dust and grease, your skin will not discharge the 2 pounds of waste, but will retain it in the body to create a disturbance.

It's the care of the skin that makes Mr. Man feel and look so good.

It's the *neglect* of the skin which gives rise to some bodily ailments and makes the most of us irritable, peevish and mentally depressed.

There's only one thing you must be careful of, however, in caring for your skin, and that's the soap you use.

You see, there's a lot of artificially colored soap sold today with very pretty names and wrappers—that is colored for a purpose. It may be to hide an excess of alkali (which eats the skin) and certain very cheap materials that smell vilely, soon turn rancid, and create skin irritations.

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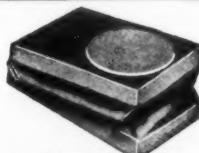
Ask the man who owns one if this is not so.

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THIS is the month of grand opera in New York. A new interest in the great singers of the world has been given by the opening of Hammerstein's Manhattan Opera House, and now New York City is the only city in the world where grand opera is given on a grand scale in two opera houses at the same time. This unusual interest in grand opera gives a special point to our announcement of five new grand opera records.

- B 41—"Nobil Dama" ("Noble Lady"), "Gli Ugonotti" ("The Huguenots")—Meyerbeer. By Mario Ancona, Baritone. Sung in Italian. Orchestra accompaniment.
- B 42—"Guardate pazzo son' io" ("Behold Me, I am Mad"), "Manon Lescaut"—Puccini. By Florencio Constantino, Tenor. Sung in Italian. Orchestra accompaniment.
- B 43—"Gebet (Prayer)," "Almaecht'ge Jungfrau" ("All-powerful Virgin"), "Tannhauser"—Wagner. By Mme. Rappold, Soprano. Sung in German. Orchestra accompaniment.
- B 44—"Bella sicccone un angelo" ("Beautiful as an Angel"), "Don Pasquale"—Donizetti. By Antonio Baritone. Sung in Italian. Orchestra accompaniment.
- B 45—"Willst jenes Tags" ("Wilt thou recall that day"), "Der Fliegende Hollaender" ("The Flying Dutchman")—Wagner. By Alois Burgstaller, Tenor. Sung in German. Orchestra accompaniment.

Comment on this list is almost unnecessary. Wherever music is known and loved these songs are great. Rappold, Scotti and Burgstaller have sung in grand opera all over this country. Ancona is Hammerstein's new baritone. Constantino is now singing in the South with the San Carlos Opera Company. Two selections are from Wagner, including the always popular "Flying Dutchman." Puccini is of special interest not only on account of his "Madame Butterfly" playing here, but also on account of the fact that he is now visiting in this country and conducting his own operas in New York.

If you love good music, go to the nearest Edison store and hear these grand opera records. These five make forty-five Edison Grand Opera Records. The complete list will be sent to any one on request. If you like grand opera music, write for it to-day. Ask for Grand Opera Selections, Supplement No. 5. Any way, if you care for music, let us send you the following Edison Musical Library. Ask for it to-day, but it will not be mailed until January 29th:

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